The Establishment of the London University and the Socio-Cultural Status of English Liberal Education, 1825-1836

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Abstract

This thesis explores the establishment and the early years of the London University in order to provide a fresh perspective on newly emerging cultural attitudes towards traditional liberal education in the 1820s and 1830s. It begins by showing that the usual historical approach of treating liberal education as a formal or systematic discourse is limited, as it is unable to account for the challenge to liberal education before 1850s. To overcome this limitation, this thesis considers liberal education primarily as a socio-cultural phenomenon, grounded in eighteenth-century gentlemanly culture. Attitudes towards liberal education were intertwined with assumptions about status distinction, and the charisma of a gentlemanly persona. This thesis then evaluates the attitudes of the London University to liberal education, by exploring its establishment in the context of three wider socio-cultural developments of the period that contested the traditional distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen. These developments were the campaign for middle-class university education, the reform in the medical professions and the rise of utilitarian sensibility.

It is argued that in affirming that the university was intended for the middle classes, the founders were actually framing the problem of educational need in terms of the socio-economic identification of upper, middle and lower class. In doing so, they provided a rival alternative to the traditional mode of identification based on the gentlemen/vulgar status distinction. This formulation was instrumental in legitimising the candidacy of non-gentlemen, particularly tradesmen, for university education. The incompatibility with the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education was further reflected in the ways in which the medical school of the university aligned itself with the cause of medical reform in the period, challenging

the old assumption that associated the respectability of a medical practitioner with his acquisition of a liberal education and his status as a gentleman. Furthermore, the rise of utilitarian sensibility in the 1820s, as reflected in the increasing ideological connotation carried by the word ‘utility’ in everyday discourse, provided a conducive cultural atmosphere for the supporters and members of the university to employ the useful/ornamental distinction in their writings and speeches and which served as an alternative evaluative framework to the liberal/illiberal contrast.

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Introduction: Liberal Education and Gentlemanly Culture

This study explores the establishment and the early years of the London University in order to see how far it reflected a challenge to the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education in the 1820s and 1830s. However, before proceeding it is vital for us to address a fundamental issue regarding the nature of this inquiry. It is regarding the relevance of our selection of the London University as a case study, and how this choice requires us to adopt a particular comprehension about liberal education which is different from the one generally used by earlier studies. The aim of this introductory chapter, therefore, is to elucidate in detail the meaning of traditional liberal education as espoused here. It opens with an overview of what historians have said about the relationship between the London University and liberal education which shows that, generally, previous historical studies give no clear answer to the question of whether the foundation of that institution signified a break or continuity from eighteenth-century liberal education. The reason for this, it is suggested, is due to their tendency to treat liberal education primarily as a formal theory or idea. As an alternative to this approach, this chapter argues for the need to consider liberal education as a socio-cultural phenomenon which is fundamentally based on the eighteenth-century sense of 'being liberal' as 'becoming [befitting] a gentleman.' In order to clarify the nature of this treatment, it then discusses how the gentlemanly culture of the period maintained the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education.

The Establishment of the London University and Liberal Education

The proposal for the establishment of a university in London was made public in early 1825 by Thomas Campbell, a Scottish poet, and it materialized two years later. The earliest participants in Campbell's plan were his friends, Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, a rich Jewish businessman, and Henry Brougham, a formidable Scottish Whig and a champion of popular education. By the end of 1825, through these individuals, many more influential men were brought to participate in the project, including utilitarians or philosophic Radicals like James Mill and George Grote, Whigs like James Mackintosh and John Russell, and the founder of the Mechanics' Institute, George Birkbeck. By early 1826, however, Campbell played a less prominent role, and Brougham began to replace him as the *de facto* leader of the group.[1] This foundation was closely associated with the wider spirit of educational reform in the period; and since the university was intended to be the first alternative to Oxbridge and its Anglican centred education, it coped with ferocious criticism in its early years.

As soon as the project was publicised in February 1825, ultra-Tory newspapers and periodicals began to mock the idea and ascribed derogatory labels such as 'Stinkomalee'[2] and 'Cockney College'[3] to the proposed university. Furthermore, the participation of some notable reformist Whigs and utilitarians like Mill and

[1] According to H. Hale Bellot, Campbell then talked of retiring and leaving the project because he was unhappy with the attitude of Brougham 'who had tricked him out of the credit of being the originator of the university.' H. Hale Bellot, *University College London 1826-1926* (London, 1929), 30; Campbell sent his official letter of resignation as council member to Leonard Horner the warden/secretary of the university on 21 January 1828. University College London, College Correspondence, 666, Thomas Campbell to Leonard Horner, 21 January 1828.

[2] According to a dictionary, the sobriquet 'Stinkomalee' was coined by Theodore Hook, the founder of the newspaper *John Bull*. It alluded to what was deemed to be the terrible location of the university, close 'to the site of a large rubbish store or sort of refuse field, into which were cast potsherds and all sorts of sweepings.' E. Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (Philadelphia, 1894), 855.

[3] 'The Cockney University', *John Bull,* 28 (July 11, 1825), 221.

Brougham, who were openly critical of the educational establishment, heightened the likelihood that the project would be seen through a political lens. The official secular ideology of the university led to a strong Anglican reaction that culminated in the foundation of the rival King's College London in 1828. This conflict was greatly reinforced by the peculiar political mood of the period where most of the founders of London University including Brougham, were also involved in some controversial campaigns such as those for Catholic emancipation and Parliamentary reform. However, despite the controversial character of its foundation, the historiography of the London University offers little more than a general account that merely describes its institutional and administrative development.[4] There has been no serious study that connects the significance of the establishment into the wider context of contemporary educational culture and thought.

It is the main contention of this study that the foundation of London University marked a significant change in the English educational mentality. The key to understanding this is located in a question that remains to be answered; namely, whether the establishment represented a departure or continuity from eighteenth-century liberal education. Although 'liberal education' is not an unfamiliar term for most students of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is helpful to examine its origins and meaning as generally conceived in the historiography of education. The origin of liberal education is traceable to the classical period. According to Kimball, the first recorded use of the term 'liberal arts' is in Cicero's *Artes Liberales*.[5] Ancient writers, however, differed on what subjects and how many should define

[4] Among the works that provide a general history of the institution are H. Hale Bellot, *University College London 1826-1926* (London, 1929); Negley Harte and John North, *The World of UCL 1828-2004* 3rd edition (London, 2004).

[5] Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: a History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York, 1986), 37-38.

the liberal arts.[6] In terms of its social character, it is well-known that liberal education in the ancient period was exclusively meant for a free citizen 'in contrast to the uncultured vulgarity of the unfree, of the slave.'[7] It was therefore expected to cultivate the personality and character of the free citizen in accordance with his commanding role in society. As Sheldon Rothblatt explains, one of the theoretical underpinnings of this formative function of liberal education was the Hellenic idea of a whole and balanced personality.[8]

This emphasis on the cultivation of the character of men of a particular social standing also constituted the core element of liberal education in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century England. The presence of this component in the period, however, was not necessarily the result of a direct continuation from antiquity. Rather it was mediated by the classical revival in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[9] English liberal education in this period was unique in the selection of its contents. Throughout the Georgian era and until the end of the nineteenth-century the conventional curriculum of liberal education was mostly restricted to two main subjects, classics (Greek and Latin languages) and mathematics. Thus, the two bastions of English liberal education in the period, Oxford and Cambridge, placed great emphasis on both subjects, though they differed on which one of the two should be given priority.[10] Historians who study the nineteenth-century rise of modern disciplines such as, the Natural Sciences, Modern History and English

[6] Ibid.
[7] Andrew Ahlgren and Carol M. Boyer, 'Visceral Priorities: Roots of Confusion in Liberal Education', *Journal of Higher Education*, 52:2 (Mar. - Apr., 1981), 173.
[8] Sheldon Rothblatt, 'The Limbs of Osiris: Liberal Education in the English Speaking World', in Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock (eds.) *The European and American University since 1800* (Cambridge, 1993), 22.
[9] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1978), i. 194-195.
[10] Christopher Stray, 'A Parochial Anomaly: Classical Tripos', in Jonathan Smith and Christopher Stray (eds.) *Teaching and Learning in 19th-century Cambridge* (Suffolk, 2001), 32; John Gascoigne, 'Mathematics and Meritocracy: the Emergence of the Cambridge Mathematical Tripos', *Social Studies of Science*, 14:4 (Nov., 1984), 547-584.

Studies attribute their slow inclusion into the university curriculum to the exclusive dominance of classics and mathematics.[11] It is therefore not unusual for liberal education to be portrayed in the historiography as a traditional force that had to be overcome in order to modernise the English educational system. Figures including William Whewell, who were well versed in the modern sciences but still revered liberal education are normally described by historians as being partially stuck in tradition, and thus not fully-fledged progressivists.[12]

If liberal education is usually associated with the two ancient universities and the traditional temperament that they represented, how can one evaluate its relationship to such a reformist project as the foundation of the London University? Among the scattered remarks by historians on the subject of the relationship between the London University and liberal education, none are really definitive. Reba Soffer, for instance, mentions in passing that the university 'never questioned the fundamental value of traditional liberal education', but observes that unlike at the two ancient universities, 'it must be secular and even specialized when the occasion needed.'[13] Ralph White, on the other hand, is of the view that the foundation of the university was based on Benthamite principles, and therefore incompatible with the spirit of

[11] John Wilkes, 'A Mist of Prejudice: The Reluctant Acceptance of Modern History at Cambridge, 1845-1873', *Teaching and Learning in 19th-Century Cambridge*, 45-46; Anthony Kearney, 'The First Crisis in English Studies 1880-1900', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 36:3 (Oct., 1988) 260; Susan Faye Cannon, *Science in Culture: The Early Victorian Period* (Kent, 1978), 15; Janet Howarth, 'Science Education in Late-Victorian Oxford: a Curious Case of Failure', *English Historical Review* 102:403 (Apr., 1987), 349-350; G.W. Roderick and M.D. Stephens, 'Scientific Studies at Cambridge and Oxford 1850-1900', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 24:1 (Feb., 1976), 51.

[12] Richard Yeo, *Defining Science: William Whewell, Natural Knowledge, and Public Debate in Early Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, 1993), 212.

[13] Reba N. Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930* (Stanford, California, 1994), 29-20.

liberal education.[14] In general, historians seem uninterested in explaining the matter in any depth. This inattentiveness is understandable as it has been widely assumed among historians that 'Oxbridge was the locus of debates regarding liberal education in England' in the nineteenth century.[15] In other words, there seems to be a strong assumption in the historical literature that the question about the status of liberal education would always find its answer in what had happened at or was related to activities at the ancient universities.

However, the most important reason why London University is not seen as a fertile ground for historians, as compared to Oxbridge, is due to the general tendency to treat liberal education as an ideal entirely represented by intellectual or theoretical productions. This attitude encourages historians to rely on the works of individual thinkers as the main sources for their research. Liberal education, by this thinking, is mainly what this or that thinker talked about. This approach is led by its own logic to focus on the ancient universities because many thinkers and theorists of liberal education were students and members of these institutions. For instance, in discussing 'the assumptions arising from the concept of liberal education' Michael Sanderson mainly concentrates on the writings of Edward Copleston, William Whewell and John Henry Newman, all of whom were associated with either Oxford or Cambridge.[16] There are two main consequences of the treatment of liberal education as a theory; first, it allows historians to probe into the question of its application, as when Martha Garland discusses the gap between the Cambridge

[14]Ralph White, 'The Anatomy of a Victorian Debate: an Essay in the History of Liberal Education', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 34: 1 (February 1986), 40.
[15] Harold Silver, 'Things Change but Names Remain the Same: Higher Education Historiography 1975-2000', *History of Education*, 35:1 (2006), 125.
[16] Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change, and Society in England 1780-1870*, 2nd Edition (London, 1983), 40-44.

curriculum and the theory of liberal education, especially the one developed by Whewell;[17] and second it also enables historians to view and study liberal education as an ideology or superstructure that was created in order to protect and legitimise the status quo of classics and mathematics or what Sanderson terms 'curricular conservatism'.[18]

The main problem with this approach, however, is that it leads to a particular understanding of what constituted a challenge to traditional liberal education. A challenge, in this respect, that is only identified when the idea of liberal education of a particular thinker was questioned or replaced with another theoretical or intellectual alternative. For example, Sanderson regards the publication of Richard Edgeworth's *Essays on Professional Education* (1809) as one of the earliest attacks on the traditional idea of liberal education due to what he sees as its emphasis on utility.[19] Furthermore, as formal criticisms of the old notion of liberal education only flourished in the mid-nineteenth century and onwards, it is usually assumed that the question of its status before the period is not really an issue for historians. White, for example, suggests that liberal education remained relatively stable throughout the first half of the nineteenth century; it was only after 1850 that its status was changing, when thinkers including Thomas Henry Huxley, John Henry Newman and Matthew Arnold started to debate the concept of liberal education itself.[20] Likewise, in Garland's study, the Cambridge ideal of liberal education – which is mainly defined in terms of Whewell's and Adam Sedgwick's writings – was only

[17] Martha McMakin Garland, *Cambridge before Darwin: the Ideal of a Liberal Education, 1800-1860* (Cambridge, 1980), 117.
[18] Sanderson, *Education*, 40-44; Peter R.H. Slee, *Learning and a Liberal Education: the Study of Modern History in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester, 1800-1914* (Manchester, 1986), 10-12; Robert Anderson, *British Universities: Past and Present* (London, 2006), 41.
[19] Sanderson, *Education*, 42.
[20] White, 'The Anatomy of a Victorian Debate', 39.

shattered in the mid-century, partly a result of the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859.

However, liberal education as a historical phenomenon was a much richer phenomenon than the thoughts of Knox, Copleston, Whewell and others. Its cultural viability and significance were drawn from sources that extended well beyond the formal and systematic discourse of individual thinkers. This thesis therefore argues for the need to consider liberal education primarily as a socio-cultural phenomenon. To study liberal education in this manner one needs to understand how its underlying assumptions were embodied in collective socio-cultural attitudes and practices; and how a subversion of them might also constitute a challenge to it. Hence, an essential part of the sustainability of liberal education in this sense was not so much its intellectual coherence, clarity or argumentation, but the quality of having its presence noticed and relevance felt across socio-cultural practices. It is further suggested that to examine liberal education in this manner, it has to be conceived as a reflection of attitudes grounded in the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal itself. Eighteenth-century English dictionaries defined 'liberal' as 'not low in birth' and 'becoming a gentleman'.[21] John Walters, when defining the word 'gentleman' in his dictionary, explained the phrase '*to bring up gentleman-like*' as to 'give one a liberal education.'[22] This meaning of liberal was unique to the English experience. As Jörn Leonhard notes in his article in comparison to France and

[21] M. Bayley, *An Universal Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*… (Edinburgh, 1764); Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd edition, 2 vols. (London, 1755), ii.
[22] John Walters, *An English and Welsh Dictionary*, 2 vols. (London, 1828), i. 523.

Germany, the meaning of 'liberal' in eighteenth-century England had a peculiarly strong aristocratic quality.[23]

English liberal education was grounded in this peculiar sense of being liberal and it still shared one of the main features of ancient *artes liberales*, namely, the presupposition of social inequality. It is therefore unsurprising that as late as the 1840s we find educational writers such as Whewell still defining liberal education as the 'education of the upper classes'.[24] Even across the Atlantic, in a society that was supposed to be more egalitarian, liberal education was still considered as something 'attainable, only, or chiefly, by the wealthier classes', and thus contrasted to popular education.[25] By emphasising the eighteenth-century sense of 'being liberal' as the main driver for the eighteenth-century experience of liberal education, this study therefore does not share Kimball's view that regards qualities such as egalitarianism and 'freedom from *a priori* strictures and standards' as characteristic features of the educational ethos in the period.[26] The important point about the sense of being liberal and its relationship to liberal education was the socio-cultural ambience of respectability and gentlemanliness that it radiated. Based on this insight, this thesis attempts to fill the gap in the existing historiography of liberal education by using the contemporary distinction between a gentleman and a non-gentleman as the primary category of analysis. Here, the question of whether the foundation of the London University represented a continuity or departure from the traditional ethos will be mainly addressed in the context of several activities in the

[23] Jörn Leonhard, 'From European Liberalism to the Languages of Liberalisms: the semantics of Liberalism in European Comparison', *Redescriptions*, 8 (2004) 20-21.
[24] William Whewell, Of a *Liberal Education in General* (London, 1845), 1.
[25] Charles Cardwell, *Thoughts on Popular and Liberal Education with Some Defence of the English and Saxon Languages* (Lexington, KY, 1836), 11.
[26] Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, 121-122.

socio-cultural domains where this distinction was contested. Therefore, this chapter provides a detailed discussion of the gentlemen/non-gentlemen distinction, its relationship to the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal, and explains why this relationship is indispensable to an understanding of liberal education as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

Gentlemanly Culture and Liberal Education

Historians are not unaware of the relationship between liberal education and a peculiar socio-cultural relationship, as they have long realised that the privilege of obtaining a liberal education was exclusively confined to the 'governing class'.[27] The only problem is that they have tended to downplay its significance in their analysis. Though acknowledged, this socio-cultural aspect is often treated as mere background information, not directly relevant to the question of liberal education. One of the few exceptions here is Sheldon Rothblatt's *Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education* (1976) which emphasises the socio-cultural dimensions of liberal education. For instance, he discusses how liberal education in the eighteenth-century was related to core elements in polite society where cultural competencies such as right conversations, manners, and taste were highly valued.[28] However, his study does not really examine how liberal education was maintained and contested through the dynamic of the distinction between gentleman and non-

[27] John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London, 2013), 173-174.
[28] Sheldon Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education: an Essay on History and Culture* (London, 1976), 66.

gentlemen. As Barnett suggests, Rothblatt's study overlooks the aspect of social or class relations.[29]

The question of status distinction, this thesis suggests, is important because to locate liberal education in the experience of the historical actors requires one to see the dynamic of social-cultural relations as constitutive of its very meaning. The question of continuity or departure from a traditional liberal education is therefore analysed in terms of whether or not this experience itself was contested. In historical studies, the use of the gentlemen/non-gentlemen status distinction as the primary category of analysis is not unprecedented. One of the best examples is Steven Shapin's *Social History of Truth* that reviews seventeenth-century scientific culture. It treats 'the significance of the demarcation between gentle and non-gentle for the overall shape of contemporary culture and for contemporary actors' general understanding of their social order.'[30] Based on this analytic category it shows how the seventeenth-century gentlemanly ethos provided a cultural legitimation for the participation of gentlemen in scientific practices, and for the exclusion of their social inferiors. The study explains, for instance, how the characteristics of a gentleman, such as his freedom from constraints, made his testimony appear to be more credible and trustworthy than those from the lower stations.[31]

In our case, gentlemanly culture was important because it maintained the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education. There were two main characteristics of that culture that were relevant to this process; first, there was the status distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen itself which ensured that the significance of

[29] Michael Barnett, 'Technology, Science and the English Tradition of Liberal Education', *Australian Journal of Teacher Educatio*n 17:1 (1992), 23.

[30] Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1994), 43.
[31] Ibid., 84.

being liberal could be immediately felt and appreciated by contemporaries; and second, there was the representation of a liberal gentlemanly persona through the discourses and practices of benevolence, breadth of character and politeness which made the aim of liberal education (i.e., forming personality) appear relevant to contemporary living experience.

Status Distinction and Liberal Education

The demarcation of spheres and practices of life into that of gentlemanly and vulgar was part and parcel in the eighteenth-century English society. Historians generally note its presence in various sorts of activities, be they military, scientific, or literary.[32] In a basic sense, 'gentleman' was both a social and moral designation, signifying, as it did, not only the socio-economic independency of a person but also his virtuous character. Due to their assured socio-economic standing, it was the landowners who could indisputably assume this unofficial title, although it was also applied to various other social groups beneath them, as low as the yeomen and freeholders. The vulgar or common people, on the other hand, were those akin to tradesmen and the labouring poor who were excluded from the exclusive club. This is not to forget the fact that the definition of a gentleman was a highly contested subject throughout the period.[33] However, as Laslett reminds us, even if the word 'gentleman' was 'uncertain in precise definition', for contemporaries it 'still meant

[32] Arthur N. Gilbert, 'Law and Honour among Eighteenth-Century British Army Officers', *Historical Journal*, 19:1 (March, 1976), 75-87; Roy Porter, 'Gentlemen and Geology: the Emergence of a Scientific Career, 1660-1920', *Historical Journal*, 21:4 (Dec., 1978), 809-836; Steven Shapin, 'A Scholar and a Gentleman: the Problematic Identity of the Scientific Practitioner in Early Modern England', *History of Science*, 29 (1991), 279-327; William Stafford, 'Representations of the Social Order in the Gentleman's Magazine 1785-1815', *Eighteenth- Century Life*, 33:2 (Spring 2009), 64-91.

[33] See, for example, 'The Real Gentleman', *Edinburgh Magazine*, 15 (Sep 1824), 311; FRY, 'On the titles "Esquire" and "Gentleman"', *Mirror* 8:227 (Dec 9 1826), 372; 'The True Gentleman', *Mirror*, 14:383 (Aug 1, 1829), 73.

something tangible, [and] substantial enough.'[34] Therefore, what is important here is how gentlemen and the status distinction that they reflected constituted a general backdrop for the eighteenth-century living experience.

The status distinction supported the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education in two ways. It provided a condition where the significance of liberal education could be conceived in terms of notions or idioms that celebrated the superiority of being a gentleman. For example, the acquisition of a liberal education was seen by some as an aspect of good breeding, a practice that urged gentlemen to avoid unnecessary contact with their social inferiors for the sake of their future accomplishments. Good breeding, a writer maintained, was 'acquir'd only by a Liberal Education, and frequent conversation with People in the higher Stations of Life; a long Study of the former, without the Exercise of the latter, will never form an accomplish'd Person' since one could not 'attain a Habit of genteel Behaviour, without familiar Conversation with People of the best Fashion.'[35] Besides being seen as an aspect of good breeding, the value of a liberal education was also defined in terms of its capacity to eradicate the traces of servitude and to cultivate the quality of gentlemanly independence in oneself. 'It is the blessed property of the liberal arts', wrote an author, 'to mollify the rudeness of the manners, and to calm the natural ferocity of the passions. The rank and poisonous weeds of slavery will shrink and wither away when overshadowed by the luxuriant and fertile branches of literature.'[36] The presence of status distinction, therefore, provided a rich background for the appreciation of liberal education.

[34] Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: Further Explored* (London, 1965), 27.
[35] 'Of True Politeness', *Gentleman's Magazin*e 4:40 (April, 1734), 191.
[36] *Whitehall Evening Post,* October 25, 1781 - October 27, 1781.

The distinction between gentlemen and vulgar also sustained the socio-cultural status of liberal education as it was based on a condition where the sense of being liberal could be reinforced through repetitive everyday practices that reminded people of their place. This condition was the deferential atmosphere of English society. Deference, as J.G.A Pocock maintains, is 'the voluntary acceptance of a leadership elite by persons not belonging to that elite, but sufficiently free as political actors to render deference not only a voluntary but also a political act.'[37] Supporting this view, Gorman reminds us through his study of electoral behaviour that deference was not equivalent to blind obedience and total dependence, and often a matter of consensus rather than coercion.[38] Ordinary socio-cultural practices such as hat doffing[39] and maintaining an appropriate distance while encountering or interacting with one's superiors were aspects of deference. In this atmosphere, the transgression of status boundaries was highly unacceptable, and in order to prevent it, contemporaries took suitable measures to remind everyone of their true positions. Army officers, for instance, were reminded to constantly put their inferiors 'upon the most disagreeable and ungentlemanly duties,' so that they would not 'think themselves gentlemen'.[40] This was no less true in domestic life. For example, upon hearing that her friend was in a relationship with a farmer, Emma, the main character in Jane Austen novel, reminded her that 'your birth ought to make you particularly careful as to your associates', and by 'being a gentleman's daughter …

[37] J.G.A Pocock, 'The Classical Theory of Deference', *American Historical Review*, 81:3 (Jun. 1976), 517.
[38] Frank O' Gorman, 'Electoral Deference in Unreformed England, 1760-1832', *Journal of Modern History*, 56:3 (Sep., 1984), 402.
[39] Penelope J. Corfield, 'Dress for Deference and Dissent', *Costume*, 23 (1989), 64- 79.
[40] *Advice to the Officers of the British Army* (London, 1783), 35.

you must support your claim to that station by every thing within your own power, or there will be plenty of people who would take pleasure in degrading you.'[41]

This deferential atmosphere was conducive to the appreciation of the sense of being liberal because, as it urged one to recognise and respect the social boundaries, it also encouraged one to understand the proper places of liberal and illiberal in the everyday order of things. This was especially possible because of the fact that the demarcation of liberal and illiberal itself corresponded to the socio-cultural boundary that divided gentlemen and the vulgar. Phrases, such as a 'liberal character', 'liberal mind', 'liberal heart' and 'liberal manners', which were commonly used in the Georgian era, signified qualities that befitted a gentleman. A newspaper article, for instance, praised the 'liberal character' of the Duke of Leeds which was attributed to his 'Having a sensible head, and a generous heart'.[42] In another example, an author spoke about 'a few enlightened men, whose judgment enables them to select, and whose liberal manners qualify them to associate with the best circles at Geneva'.[43] The significance of being liberal can also be grasped by looking at how gentlemen in the period really loathed the state of being illiberal.

Among the gentle class, for instance, there was a notable habit of discrediting their equals by charging them with being illiberal. In such cases, the adjective 'illiberal' was normally attributed to opinions that were thought to be unjust, unfounded, fallacious or slanderous; and to behaviours that were deemed unacceptable and unfitting for a gentleman. One essayist, for example, was condemned for his 'uncandid and illiberal manner' and 'truly plebeian sentiments' as he insulted

[41] Jane Austen, *Emma*, 3 vols. (London, 1816), i. 54 - 58.
[42] *Public Advertiser*, Wednesday, March 25, 1789.
[43] Robert Gray, *Letters during the Course of a Tour through Germany, Switzerland, and Italy* (London, 1794), 208.

certain clergymen in his writing.[44] Illiberal opinions were thought to be the result of personal prejudices and interests, rather than laudable disinterestedness. A writer for the *Ipswich Journal* described the critique of a healing product, Cordial Balm of Gilead, as the 'loud clamour of illiberal prejudice raised by interested individuals.'[45] An illiberal opinion was also characterised as a narrow one, confined to a particular situation, which could distort the wider picture of an issue. Another correspondent, for example, lambasted the editor of *The Times* for his 'very illiberal manner' in discussing a subject on agriculture, and attributed that to the fact that 'your avocation confines you to a great city.'[46]

In a general sense, the pervasiveness of the charge of being illiberal across various discourses suggests that the sense of being liberal was hegemonic enough to make anything that did not conform to it appear simply to be its negation. The contrast between liberal and illiberal corresponded to the assumption that, as they were in the state of leisure and independence, gentlemen were more inclined to be broad and disinterested in their judgment; while the vulgar, due to their economic, political and social dependency, were naturally disposed to be narrow and partial in theirs. This sentiment is traceable to Aristotle's idea of liberality that recognised, for example, the moral superiority of those who inherit money over those who earn it. For Aristotle, 'the earning process' debases the character because 'it breeds an attachment to money that hinders liberal action.'[47] Therefore, when eighteenth-century contemporaries called a gentleman's judgment illiberal, they implied that he was behaving like those who were under constraint and dependency. This means that even while making moral judgments upon their equals, gentlemen tended to express

[44] *Public Advertiser*, Thursday, September 26, 1782.
[45] 'The Cordial Balm of Gilead', *Ipswich Journal*, Saturday, April 18, 1807.
[46] John Bull, 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, 26 Apr, 1819, 3.
[47] Howard J. Curzer, *Aristotle and the Virtues* (Oxford, 2012), 93.

it in a language that emphasised, however implicitly, their state of being liberal or being socially superior. In a deeper sense, this demonstrates that the prevailing practice of attributing the qualities liberal and illiberal to activities and individuals was only meaningful in the context of the deferential atmosphere of the society as whole. From this we can see how the presence of status distinction allowed contemporaries to immediately understand the meaning of being liberal through their everyday behaviours and practices.

It is this concreteness of an eighteenth-century sense of being liberal that maintained the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education. To put this into perspective, one just needs to realise how in our time the question of what describes an education process as liberal is largely a theoretical and pedagogical concern, and sometimes is also mixed with abstract concepts associated with modern liberalism such as liberty and individual autonomy.[48] The difficulty in grounding the definition of liberal in a liberal education as something really tangible naturally leads many twentieth and twenty-first century writers to clarify in their works what made education liberal. This practice simply reflects the assumption that the liberal status of liberal education is not something immediately clear to their audience. Those in the eighteenth century, however, did not suffer from this predicament, as the sense of being liberal in their liberal education had a real presence in the socio-cultural relations. Perhaps the best evidence of this from the period was the institutional life of Oxford and Cambridge.

The status hierarchy that served as the backdrop of life at the ancient universities was integral to the way they appreciated the significance of liberal education.

[48] See for instance Overton H. Taylor, 'Liberal Education and Liberalism', *Ethics*, 55:2 (Jan., 1945), 88-109; Mark Blitz, 'Liberal Education and Liberalism', *Good Society*, 13: 3 (2004), 45-48.

Foreign visitors such as V.A Huber, the German travel writer and social reformer, were struck by 'the peculiar recognition of birth and rank, which has penetrated into the arrangements of the English Universities.'[49] Another observer, talking of Cambridge, maintained that 'in this "Republic of Letters" every thing is classified by the *standard of aristocracy*.'[50] Students were classified according to their social ranks, the highest of which were noblemen, with Servitors (or Sizars at Cambridge) being the lowest. The latter were supposed to carry out menial tasks and were denied some rights, such as dining with the other students. Some regarded the conditions of these inferior groups in the universities as contrary to the spirit of a liberal education that was antithetical to servility. As one writer pointed out, 'It implies a contradiction, for men to be at once learning the *liberal arts*, and at the same time treated as *slaves*, at once studying freedom and practicing servitude.'[51] This shows that the nature of the institutional relationship reflected in collegiate life itself was, as in the wider society, paternalistic and deferential.

The presence of these paternalist and deferential practices in the ancient institutions ensured that the sense of being liberal could be immediately felt within their walls, and this sustained their entrenched belief in the significance of liberal education being maintained for the upper classes. One can see how the emphasis on order and distinction in their institutional experience was interwoven with the high regard that they had for liberal education. For instance, when preparing the institution for a reception for the Earl of Westmorland, the Chancellor of Oxford, Heads of Houses were ordered to not only to remind students to wear 'their caps and gowns suitable to their degree and condition' but also to make sure that they 'behave with such order

[49] V.A. Huber, *The English Universities*, 2 vols. (London, 1842), ii. 201.
[50] 'Pernicious Effects of the System of Education Pursued in Our Great Universities', *Oriental Herald*, 6:21 (September, 1825), 502.
[51] *London Chronicle*, 26April, 1759 – 28 April, 1759.

and decency, as becomes a gentleman of a liberal education.'[52] This interconnection between status hierarchy and liberal education was later articulated by Edward Copleston, the Provost of Oriel. Speaking about the collegiate life at Oxbridge, he stressed that 'a man may truly be said to have had the advantages of liberal education' not only 'by the cultivation of literature', but also through 'a voluntary association of gentlemen, in which a gradation of authority is maintained, where a close personal connexion subsists between each younger member and some one more in advanced in years, while all are united in a common bond of attachment to the whole community'.[53] Hence, it is obvious here that status distinction itself constituted the meaning of traditional liberal education and was essential to the preservation of its status.

The Air of a Gentlemanly Persona

Besides status distinction, the pervasive gentlemanly culture also promoted the socio-cultural status of liberal education through the aura of a gentlemanly persona which made the educational aim of forming a gentleman relevant to affairs in the real world. This aura was radiated through three main features of a gentlemanly persona, namely, benevolence, an enlarged mind or character, and politeness. In the period, benevolence was not only discussed by moral philosophers, who saw it as 'an affection that seeks as its object the good of another;'[54] it was also generally cherished as a precondition for social stability and thus a significant aspect of

[52] *Public Advertiser*, Monday, July 2, 1759.
[53] [Edward Copleston], 'The London University', *Quarterly Review* 33:65 (Dec 1825), 264-265
[54] T.A. Roberts, *The Concept of Benevolence: Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Moral Philosophy* (London, 1973), 7.

communal paternalism.[55] The idea of the benevolent gentleman had a special importance with regards to liberal education as it was also connected to the eighteenth-century meaning of being liberal. Eighteenth-century dictionaries stated that another meaning of 'liberal', apart from 'becoming a gentleman', was 'generous'.[56] For contemporaries, however, the link between the two meanings was more substantial than just lexical. As Shapin remarks, 'In early modern usage generosity and gentle behaviour were practically synonymous terms.'[57]

The centrality of benevolence in the contemporary discourse on morals, and the capacity of the members of the upper classes to embody it through their official magisterial functions and philanthropic activities solidified the eighteenth-century sense of 'being liberal' as both 'being generous' and 'becoming a gentleman' and ensured its immediate presence in the living experience of contemporaries. It is not difficult to locate examples in eighteenth-century texts which show how being generous and being a gentleman implied each other. The most influential moralist of the period, William Paley, for example, considered charity as 'a proper conduct towards those who are beneath us, and dependent upon us.'[58] Praises over benevolent acts in contemporary discourse were common and they testified to and elevated the moral and personal worth of the participants: 'respect and admiration were evinced wherever Benevolence led its votary.'[59] According to a writer, landlords who 'reduced the rents of their estates', were publicly extolled and their

[55] Homo, 'Benevolence', *European Magazine*, 80 (November 1821), 431.
[56] Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*.
[57] Shapin, *Social History of Truth*, 51.

[58] William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (London, 1785), 192.
[59] Homo, 'Benevolence', 430.

'act of liberality is gratefully appreciated by every tenant, and is justly entitled to publicity and imitation.'[60]

Hence, through the discourse of benevolence and practices associated with it, contemporaries were able to feel the effects of the moral presence of a gentlemanly persona. More importantly, the identification of this persona played a critical role in the contemporary characterisation of a liberal education and a liberally educated personality. For instance, one text described a well-educated lady not only by highlighting her polite conversation and erudition, but also by emphasising her benevolence to a poor country girl: 'I saw her slip a Half-Crown privately into her hand.'[61] While referring to a recently deceased gentleman, whose character was 'improv'd by a liberal Education', a writer praised him on the grounds that 'the byass of all his actions was a universal benevolence'.[62] Thomas Hough, in describing the advantage of a liberal and virtuous education, wrote that 'A man whose mind has been tinctur'd with an early seasoning of morality and virtuous principles' would consider 'universal justice and benevolence as bound upon him by the eternal reason, and relations of things, and therefore practices both, not so much out of any worldly or political views, as out of a principle of duty and obligation.'[63]

Another feature of the gentlemanly persona that was related to liberal education was an enlarged mind. In the eighteenth century, this feature could also be expressed through several other terms such as a 'generous mind' or 'liberal mind'. According to one journalist, for example, 'he, with lib'ral and enlarged mind, who loves his

[60] 'Liberal Landlords', *Morning Post*, Thursday 11 August, 1814.
[61] David Fordyce, *Dialogues Concerning Education*, 2nd edition (London, 1745), 7.
[62] *London Evening Post*, 15August, 1734 - 17August, 1734.
[63] Thomas Hough, *The Happiness and Advantages of a Liberal and Virtuous Education: A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul on January the 25th, 1728* (Cambridge, 1728), 16.

country cannot hate mankind.'[64] When a gentleman was described as having an enlarged mind, it was usual for the description to include other features that could be recognised as the consequence of liberal education, such as eloquence. For example, one writer claimed that through the 'enlarged mind and animating oratory of Lord Chatham, this nation was invigorated to the achievements that put us in possession of our present power and consequence.'[65] In the discourse of traditional liberal education, the value of having an enlarged mind was often stressed, and it was claimed that it could only be formed through proper education. Hough, for instance, maintained that:

> We owe … the progress and advancement of learning and arts, and whatever is either necessary, or convenient, or ornamental in life, to such persons who, by the benefit of an ingenuous education, have had their minds enlarg'd and cultivated, and have been train'd up in such enquiries and pursuits, as have at last produc'd these happy discoveries.[66]

The above passage is important because it suggests that from the perspective of liberal education all advancements in the sciences and arts were the result of the enlarged mind which it alone could produce. This helps to explain why the acquisition of liberal education was seen as a more noble and significant pursuit than the mastery of specific sciences or arts.

An enlarged mind was contrasted to the mental narrowness which was believed to be the result of specialisation. A gentleman of liberal education was supposed to despise and stay away from narrow pursuits as they symbolised servility and dependence.[67] This discouragement of specialization made the ethos of liberal

[64] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 18 June, 1764 – 20 June, 1764.
[65] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, Monday, May 22, 1769.
[66] Hough, *Happiness and Advantages*, 16.
[67] Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change*, 124.

education antithetical to occupational interests.[68] 'The employment each man follows', wrote one author, 'wholly engrosses his attention, and tinges the mind with a peculiar die, which shews itself in all the operations of it, unless prevented by natural good sense and liberal education.'[69] This belief in gentlemanly breadth and its superiority over the servile narrowness or specialism was still found in the Victorian period, as illustrated by a scene from the mid-nineteenth-century novel, *North and South*. During a conversation, Mr. Hale, the father of the main character (i.e., Margaret) tells the mother of Mr. Thornton (a factory owner) that he had observed the enjoyment of her son in learning and appreciating classical literature. The mother replies that rather than meddling with classics, she preferred people 'to have their thoughts and powers absorbed in the work of today [industry]'. Upon hearing this Margaret responds, 'But, surely, if the mind is too long directed to one object only, it will get stiff and rigid, and unable to take in many interests.'[70] The numerous references to gentlemen of enlarged mind in contemporary discourse suggests that there was a correspondence between the aims of liberal education to form a gentleman and the various sorts of affairs which they had to deal with in the real world. This correspondence was important as it was another aspect of liberal education which enabled contemporaries to immediately feel the practical relevance and significance of the educational ethos.

From this discussion we can see that a liberally educated gentleman was believed to be capable of performing the right action at the right time under any circumstances,

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[68] In the case of Oxford this prejudice towards occupations lasted until the early decades of the twentieth century. For instance, Jack Morell showed that when Engineering was first introduced at the ancient university in 1908, it was named 'Engineering Science' in order to emphasize its scholarly and non-vocational character. Jack Morrell, *Science at Oxford, 1914-1939: Transforming an Arts University* (Oxford, 1997), 83.

[69] ***Connoisseur***, Thursday, 24 July, 1755.
[70] Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (New York, 1855), 46.

not because he possessed theoretic knowledge of any particular subject, but because of his enlarged personality. Hence, questions like how classics could help, in a technical sense, a potential military officer on the battlefield did not arise in the discourse of liberal education, as it was assumed that once the personality was formed he would instinctively know how to make the right decision. As one writer observed, 'a liberal education, instead of unfitting a man for ordinary avocations, prepares him for any situation in life, and teaches him the propriety of applying himself with diligence to whatever he undertakes.' The key phrase here is 'applying himself' which suggests the centrality of the agent or the (whole) person himself as the precondition of a good action or practice.[71] This understanding of the relationship between liberal education and gentlemanly action can be traced back to Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*. The important point is that through this classical idea, one can further discern the underlying logic that sustained this understanding.

Translated into English as 'practical wisdom' or 'prudence' *phronesis* was practical knowledge in the form of action or doing, in contrast to *techne* (art) which was practice in the form of production or making. In Aristotle's scheme the activity of a statesman embodied the former, that of the craftsman the latter. *Phronesis* differed from *techne* in two main respects. First, the question of one's personal character was integral to the valuation of one's practice. Joseph Dunne, for instance, maintains that what distinguishes *phronesis* from *techne* was 'the presence of the agent, who is invested in his action more completely than the producer is in his product.'[72] Furthermore, in *phronesis* man's relation to means and ends was internal rather than external. As Nicholas Lobkowicz notes, 'while "making" aims at an end is different

[71]Aurelius, 'No. V. On the Advantages of a Liberal Education', *European Magazine,* 42 (Dec. 1802), 430.
[72] Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgment and the Lure of Technique* (Indiana, 1993), 263.

from the very act of "making", the end of "doing" is nothing else but the act of "doing" itself performed well.'[73] For instance, a chair produced as an end product by a craftsman was independent from rather than a part of him; but a virtuous action, which was an end for a statesman, was at the same time an integral part of his character. It is not difficult to see here how with this emphasis on the constitutive role of character in action or practice, the concept of the gentleman of liberal education matched with the idea of a man of *phronesis*. The awareness of this parallel has a special importance for this thesis as in one of the later chapters we shall see what happened to this conception when the notion of practice in educational discourse started to be increasingly defined in terms of *techne*.

The final feature of the gentlemanly persona that was instrumental in maintaining the socio-cultural status of liberal education was politeness. It is a well-known fact that the language of politeness was one of the core features of the eighteenth-century culture of gentility.[74] Related to concepts such as manners, civility and character, this language, according to Lawrence Klein, 'was used to make a wide range of objects intelligible'.[75] Sharing the same view, Paul Langford maintains that it affected all aspects of life, from trivial matters such 'as the time at which one dined, and the way one ate one's dinner' to important ones such 'as the expectations and arrangements of partners in marriage.'[76] Although some historians have argued that

[73] Nicholas Lobkowicz, *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx* (Notre Dame, 1967), 9.
[74] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727 – 1783* (Oxford, 1989), 71; _____, 'The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6:12 (2002), 311; Lawrence Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England', *Historical Journal* 32:3 (Sept, 1989), 583; _____, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *Historical Journal* 45:4 (Dec., 2002), 870.
[75] Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness', 583.
[76] Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 71; George C. Brauer, *The Education of a Gentleman: Theories of Gentlemanly Education in England, 1660-1775* (New York, 1959), 61-62.

the state of being polite was basically open and accessible to all,[77] it still played an important role as one of the markers of status distinction. As Klein claims, the language of politeness did 'much to fortify the distinctions between patrician and plebeian in culture.'[78] For instance, contemporaries tended to assume that one of the defining features of the lower orders was their lack of manners. Hence, when a book of manners warned against the undesirable behaviour of grumbling about what had been served, it referred to such a behaviour as 'fitting only for an ill-bred Mechanick at an Eight-penny ordinary'.[79]

Interestingly, the emphasis which eighteenth-century gentlemen placed on sociability sometimes led them to complain about excessive learning which they believed could lead to pedantry, a quality unfitting a gentleman. The classic illustration of this emphasis may be found in Earl of Chesterfield's *The Accomplished Gentleman* (published 1782), when it contrasted the laudable characters of sociable gentlemen with pedantic scholars and ignorant members of the lower orders.[80] However, this attitude triggered a reaction among those who considered learning as a more vital component of liberal education. For instance, in his *Liberal Education,* Vicesimus Knox used the label 'men of the world' to refer to those whom '[t]he business of forming the gentleman they arrogate to themselves, and are too apt to separate that character from the idea of a scholar.'[81] Speaking of this tension, David Fordyce lamented that 'one kind of Knowledge has been thought necessary to furnish *a learned* Head, and quite another to form a *Gentleman*.'[82]

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[77] Langford, 'The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness', 315-316.
[78] Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness', 588.
[79] *The Man of Manners: Or, Plebeian Polish'd* (London, 1737?), 5-7.
[80] Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, *The Accomplished Gentleman; or Principles of Politeness, and of Knowing the World,* (Dublin, 1782), 20-21.
[81] Vicesimus Knox, *Liberal Education or, a Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning*, 3rd Edition (London, 1781), 6.
[82] Fordyce, *Dialogues Concerning Education*, 98.

However, despite these differences of emphasis, it is evident that they shared the same underlying concern over the formation or constitution of a gentleman, thus still within the framework of traditional liberal education. In fact, many writers stressed the interdependence of learning and politeness as a necessary condition for the formation of a gentleman. As Stephen Philpot maintained, if 'Learning is to enlarge the understanding and form the Judgment … Politeness is to finish the Character of a Gentleman', and each 'is ill supported without a due share for both.'[83]

In his treatise on liberal and virtuous education, Hough claimed that among the benefits of liberal education was that it 'forms and directs our manners'[84] and 'Refines and Civilizes our Nature.'[85] By this he meant that it was education that among other things, 'polishes our rude, unform'd natures, smooths our rugged dispositions, makes our crooked tempers straight … and at last disciplins us into humanity.'[86] Furthermore, being a student of liberal education itself was like being a candidate for polite society. A university, for instance, was portrayed by one writer as 'the public theatre of the world, where you are to chuse the character you will act in, and where you will have many critical observers of your behaviour.'[87] Therefore, when the character of a gentle person was described in the public domain, it naturally included a testament both of his liberal education and his polite disposition. For instance, on the appointment of Alderman William Thompson to the high office of sheriff of London and Middlesex, the Recorder of the City stated 'that Mr. Thompson is a gentleman of liberal education, great acquirements, and amiable

[83] Stephen Philpot, *An Essay on the Advantage of a Polite Education Joined with a Learned One* (London, 1747), ix-x.
[84] Hough, *Happiness and Advantages*, 8.
[85] Ibid., 12.
[86] Ibid.
[87] *A Letter to Young Gentleman upon His Admission into the University* (London, 1753), 1-2.

manners …'[88] Likewise, an advertisement looking for a partner 'in a MEDICAL UNDERTAKING' described the desired character of the candidate as 'a Gentleman of liberal education, good address, amiable manners…'[89] In a more personal pursuit, a man searching for a wife described himself in a newspaper as 'A GENTLEMAN, under thirty years of age, of liberal education … pleasing manners, and domesticated disposition'.[90] From this, we can see how important the culture of politeness was to contemporary appreciation of liberal education.

In general, this discussion of a gentlemanly persona shows that the relevance of liberal education could be easily identified in the period since the subject that it claimed to form, namely a benevolent and polite gentleman, had a real and effective presence in various sorts of activities in the world. Therefore, it is clear that gentlemanly culture as a whole was instrumental in maintaining the socio-cultural status of liberal education. This treatment of liberal education as a socio-cultural phenomenon, however, requires us to rethink two basic assumptions that have long underpinned the historiography of liberal education. The first concerns the relationship between the concept of liberal education and education, the second, the connection between liberal education and classics.

On Education and Classics

There is a strong tendency in the historical literature to assume that liberal education was merely a *type* of education, which could be contrasted with other types of learning such as technical and professional education. This assumption was

[88] 'Lancaster Borough Session', *Lancaster Gazette*, Saturday, October 12, 1822.
[89] *Morning Chronicle*, Saturday, 27 June, 1801.
[90] *Morning Post*, Friday, 11 December, 1801, 1.

plausible in the twentieth century, when liberal education was institutionally classified and accepted as one among other kinds of education. However, this was not the case in the eighteenth-century since during this period liberal education was closer to being a byword for education per se. A few examples will help to demonstrate how far the eighteenth-century meaning of education was deeply entwined with the idea of being liberal or being a gentleman. Johnson's and other eighteenth-century dictionaries, for instance, defined 'education' as the 'formation of manners in youth'.[91] Although 'manners' here could simply mean habits in a neutral sense, without implying goodness or badness, its contemporary usages often carried a gentlemanly and thus normative connotation. This was evident in the famous aphorism, 'manners maketh man'. As one observer remarks, 'virtue, knowledge and integrity are implied in the word manners…'[92] Hence, a book entitled 'The Man of Manners' was basically about how to behave like a gentleman in many aspects of life.[93]

If manners were thus the exclusive property of gentlemen then, it follows that education as the formation of manners was *ipso facto* a gentlemanly enterprise. In other words, it was equivalent to liberal education. Therefore, it should not surprise us that contemporaries such as William Whewell claimed that liberal education alone exhibited 'in any completeness, the idea of education'.[94] However, if liberal education was a synonym for education at the time, what did contemporaries mean when they used the phrase 'illiberal education'. The answer is that in the rare instances in which it was used in this way, it only meant a negation of liberal

[91] Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*; M. Bayley, *An Universal Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Edinburgh, 1764); John Ash, *The New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1795).
[92] 'Modern Breeding Censured', *Court* (Dec, 1764), 479.
[93] *The Man of Manners*, 5-7.
[94] Whewell, *Of a Liberal Education*, 2.

education or education, and lacked any positive view of its own. For instance, when writing about a girl 'under sentence of death for robbing her master' a newspaper correspondent asked his readers to consider her 'tender age … with the disadvantage of an illiberal education.'[95] In a critical description of a new chairman of a society, it was written that he 'is a person of very obscure birth, and illiberal education', having 'never studied either the language or decency of any university except that of Billingsgate.'[96] 'Illiberal education' here simply meant no education.

As status was essential to the very notion of 'education', those who received education or a liberal education might also be referred to simply as 'the educated class'. A critic gave a very helpful clarification of the term in the following words:

> The term 'educated class,' as applied to the portion of our countrymen who are above manual labour, will scarcely be taken by any one to mean they enjoy the means of education perfect or nearly perfect. The term is relative; and, certainly when compared with the manual-labour class, who have no education at all worthy the name, we are an educated class. But no error is more profound, or more prevalent, than the persuasion that we are an educated class in the best sense of the term.[97]

Basically, this shows that the very idea of education could not be conceived of as something external to the hegemonic distinction of liberal and illiberal, rather it was defined by it. Apart from revising the understanding of the relationship between liberal education and education, the approach of this thesis also requires us to reconsider the relationship between classics and traditional liberal education.

One aim of this study is to question the tendency to see the promotion of classical studies as a simple equivalent to the promotion of traditional liberal education, by showing, first of all that contemporaries could still stress the importance of classics,

[95] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, Monday, September 30, 1765. .
[96] *Independent Chronicle*, 23 February, 1770 – 26 February 1770.
[97] 'Education of the Middle Classes', *Leigh Hunt's London Journal,* 36 (Dec. 3, 1834), 282.

without necessarily subscribing to traditional liberal education. Therefore, by treating liberal education as a social phenomenon, our task in this respect is to identify whether the attitude of the respective person or institution towards the subject was still compatible with traditional liberal education. There are two main conditions that reflect the compatibility, and both are related to the distinction between the gentleman and non-gentleman. The first is when the significance of classics was still primarily conceived in terms of the ideals of forming and being a gentleman, rather than in terms of serving any professional or occupational purposes; and the second is when it was still considered superior to other modern languages.

Although the second condition might appear unrelated to the problem of the gentleman/non-gentleman gap, it was actually one of its constituents. Traditionally, the sense that the ancient languages were superior to modern languages was not just a matter of intellectual justification; rather it significantly mirrored the socio-cultural superiority of gentlemen to commoners. Christopher Stray demonstrates that by acquiring classical languages, particularly Latin, some sections of the middle classes not only completed their 'social ascent to gentlemanly status', but also constructed a cultural boundary with 'their aspirant inferiors' who merely knew English.[98] Therefore, in this context, an act of equating classics with modern languages could be read as a sign of relative indifference towards status distinction.

[98] Christopher Stray, *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities, and Society in England, 1830-1960* (Oxford, 1998), 32.

The Structure of the Study

This chapter has elucidated in detail the nature of liberal education. It was a socio-cultural phenomenon, grounded in the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal which in turn was sustained by two characteristics of the gentlemanly culture, namely, the status distinction between gentlemen and vulgar, and the aura of a gentlemanly persona. Based on this formulation, we can say that any educational scheme that was indifferent or hostile to the gentlemen/vulgar distinction was incompatible with traditional liberal education. No doubt, the kind of proposal or project that demands greater scrutiny was the one that claimed to provide the first alternative university education to the experience provided by Oxford and Cambridge, i.e., the establishment of the London University. It is therefore the aim of this study to evaluate the attitudes of the London University towards liberal education, by exploring its foundation in the context of wider socio-cultural developments of the period which contested the traditional status distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen.

However, before proceeding to this examination, we shall first look at some attitudes regarding the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education that developed over the sixty years prior to the foundation of the London University. This account is vital because, apart from providing us with an indispensable sense of continuity from what had occurred before, it will also give us the chance to evaluate the significance of the establishment of the new university in relationship to earlier changes in educational assumptions. Exploring the evolution of Joseph Priestley's educational thought since the publication of his *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education* in 1765 until his later writings and speeches in the 1790s, chapter one

provides a case study reviewing these developments. It is argued that by exploring the development of Priestley's educational thought, one can see the early formation of a new educational mentality which can be understood in terms of the gradual departure from the issue of gentlemanliness. This process was mainly exemplified in the use of new social categories as subjects in educational discourse, beginning with 'gentlemen of active life' in the 1760s and 'middle classes' from the 1770s onwards, both of which were incompatible with the idea of a gentleman and gentlemanliness in traditional liberal education. However, despite such trajectories, the development in the period was still limited, as the traditional sense of being liberal itself remained relatively untouched in the wider socio-cultural context.

The second chapter then shows how, in comparison to Priestley's time, the socio-cultural atmosphere of the 1820s in general was more hostile to assumptions of traditional liberal education. This is because of two important developments in the wider political and intellectual culture of the period that effectively contested the paternalist picture of social relations, and thus weakened the cultural integrity of the long-standing sense of being liberal. The first was the emergence of liberalism as a political sentiment that did not just reflect a new sense of political affiliation but also deemed, however implicitly, status distinction as a less important element in politics; and the second was the cultural ascendancy of political economy which provided an alternative normative framework of social relations that contested the paternalist practice of deference and benevolence. These developments therefore eroded some of the primary aspects of the gentlemanly culture, and consequently generated an atmosphere that was conducive to a serious and unprecedented challenge to the dominance of traditional liberal education.

We then explore the establishment of the London University in the context of three wider socio-cultural circumstances of the period where the distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen were contested i.e., the campaign for middle-class university education, the reform of the medical professions and the rise of utilitarian sensibility. Chapter three argues that, as the establishment of the London University was driven by the broader demand for a middle-class university in the metropolis, its break from traditional liberal education was partly reflected in the tendency of the founders to frame the problem of educational need in terms of the socio-economic identification of upper, middle and lower classes, which signified an alternative cultural assumption to that which underpinned liberal education, i.e., the gentlemen/vulgar status distinction. Since, by middle classes, the founders generally meant tradesmen, who were traditionally considered non-gentlemen, the use of this socio-economic category was instrumental in emancipating this respective social group from the stigma of being vulgar, and thus legitimising their candidacy for university education. The incompatibility with the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education was further exhibited in the ways in which the founders and members of the university conceived the significance of the liberal professions. With special attention on the medical profession, chapter four demonstrates how the medical school of the university aligned itself with the cause of medical reform in the period, challenging the old assumptions that identified the respectability of a medical practitioner with his acquisition of a liberal education. In addition, by emphasising that the ideal character of a medical practitioner was in his role as an efficient practitioner, defined by the ability to apply scientific theories to practice, the discourse of the medical school created a new professional identity that rivalled the old image of a liberally educated gentleman-physician. In chapter five we

explain how the rise of utilitarian sensibility in the 1820s, as manifested with the growing ideological connotation carried by the word 'utility' in the everyday discourse, made for a cultural atmosphere in which the supporters and members of the London University could employ the useful and ornamental distinction in their writings and speeches, which was an alternative evaluative framework to the liberal/illiberal contrast. Since usefulness here was understood in an ordinary rather than a philosophical sense, that is, as immediate practicality, it gave weight to their claim that subjects like classics, which traditionalists considered the most liberal, were merely ornamental, and thus inferior in their degree of utility.

Chapter six uses the insights from the above discussions to re-examine the significance of the establishment of what is often considered its primary rival institution, King's College London. It demonstrates that, despite its emphasis on religious instruction and its close relationship with the ancient universities, King's College London, due to its middle-class and metropolitan character, exemplified similar attitudes towards liberal education as its Gower-Street counterpart. The last chapter then provides a brief account of the continuance of this cultural contestation in the Victorian period. By exploring the writings and speeches of figures like Matthew Arnold, Herbert Spencer and Thomas Henry Huxley, it suggests, that although the values and qualities associated with the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal, such as disinterestedness and an enlarged mind, were still represented through key Victorian idioms like 'mental culture' and 'culture', they were now divorced from the problematics of status distinction and concrete socio-cultural practices.

Methodology and Evidence

It is difficult to characterise the kind of history represented by this study as it incorporates some elements of intellectual, cultural and social history. As the thesis is more concerned with 'collective attitudes' and 'unspoken and unconscious assumptions', however, it may be best described as a history of mentalities.[99] One of the features of this type of history, as Jacques Le Goff contends, is that it relies on a wide variety of sources, intellectual, literary, and pictorial.[100] Primary sources utilised in this study may be classified into four main headings: 1) systematic and philosophical treatises and speeches, 2) literature and pictures, 3) correspondence, and 4) administrative documents. All these sources were reviewed in either digital or physical materials. The digital sources were drawn from several online databases including the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, *ProQuest British Periodicals*, *Gale Historical Newspapers*, and *Hansard*. The physical materials were gathered from five main locations: University College London Archives, the Wellcome Library, the British Library, Senate House Library, and King's College London Archives. We shall now discuss in detail the use of each type of source.

First, it needs to be stressed that although we treat liberal education in a radically different manner, this does not mean that we altogether exclude sources like systematic or philosophical treatises that have been widely used in earlier studies. They certainly have their place in our historical analysis. However, in this study, such treatises about liberal education will be mainly read as an extension of liberal education as a socio-cultural phenomenon. This is because, despite the presence of

[99] Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1997), 162; Patrick H. Hutton, 'The History of Mentalities: the new Map of Cultural History', *History and Theory,* 20:3 (Oct., 1981), 237 -239; Jacques Le Goff, 'Mentalities: a New Field for Historians', *Social Science Information,* 13:81 (1974), 83.
[100] Le Goff, 'Mentalities', 89 – 90.

individual idiosyncrasies in this or that idea of liberal education, they are all framed by its socio-cultural assumptions. For instance, by stating in his treatise that liberal education was the 'education of the upper classes' William Whewell was simply reiterating and rearticulating the existing basic assumption about liberal education that was not just held at the level of formal thought, but more importantly apparent in their quotidian practices. In other words, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, liberal education, to a large extent, preceded personal efforts that attempted to articulate and theorise it. Formal treatises are considered incompatible with the assumptions of eighteenth-century liberal education if they were indifferent or hostile to the traditional sense of being liberal. The features of gentlemanly culture that have been discussed in this chapter may be used as a general outline to guide us in identifying the tendency of those kinds of sources.

Basically the reliance on formal and systematic discourses varies according to the need and aim of each chapter. Chapter one (on the eighteenth century) and chapter seven (on the nineteenth century) heavily rely upon formal treatises, as both are not directly dealing with the main subject of this study, rather their objectives are merely to provide sketches of the preceding and succeeding developments towards and from the period under investigation (1825 – 1836). Therefore, in chapter one we will look at texts including Priestley's *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education* and Vicesimus Knox's *Liberal Education*, while in chapter seven our attention will be directed to those including Thomas Henry Huxley's *Liberal Education and Where to Find It*, Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, Frederic Farrar's *Essays on a Liberal Education* and Spencer's *Essays on Education*. It is true that most of these sources have been used in earlier studies, but, given the different conception of liberal education adopted for this study, the need for a new reading and analysis is

justifiable. In other chapters, although the range of sources is diverse, formal discourses are not underrepresented. As chapters two to six deal with the core subject of this study, the foundation of the London University, lectures or addresses delivered by the members of the institution and to some extent by those of its rival, King's College London feature prominently. This include among others, George Long's introductory lecture to Greek language, Charles Bell's and Robert Grant's medical lectures, and Joseph Henry Green's address during the opening of the Medical School at King's College London. Other than treatises, lectures and addresses, these chapters also explore some articles from various newspapers and periodicals of the period, such as *The Times*, *Edinburgh Review* and *British Magazine*.

Apart from formal discourses, this study also examines literary and pictorial materials. Among them are poems and writings of satirical nature and caricatures. Most historical topics that we touch upon, such as the extension of middle-class education, and medical reform were highly polemical subjects in the period and thus were fertile grounds for the production of satirical pieces in both prosaic and poetic forms. Although earlier historical literature on the London University has used some of these materials, their interpretive efforts upon them were minimal and not really directed towards discovering any deeper and contested educational attitudes that they conveyed. In reviewing them, we are specifically concerned with the employment of certain concepts, metaphors and symbols that communicated collective feelings and sentiments pertaining to the relationship between education, status distinction, and gentlemanliness. Chapter three is the most reliant on these kinds of sources. It explores not only satirical poems and proses, but also caricatures. Other chapters that include this type of material are four and five.

Correspondence, both published and unpublished, are another example of sources used in this study. The most examined is the College Correspondence which consisted of internal communication among members of the London University. This includes the correspondence between professors, students, the warden and the Council. Apart from this, we also rely on several correspondences between the Council and some candidates for professorships during the early stage of the institution, which include testimonials supporting their applications. The use of correspondence, however, is not restricted to those relating to the London University. For instance, in chapter six, we also utilise the King's College London secretary's correspondence. The use of correspondence is indispensable because they are appropriate to reveal the institutional experience of members of the university and their immediate perception of the significance of the establishment. From here one can identify their underlying attitudes towards education as expressed in a more spontaneous and personal manner.

Other than correspondence, this study also uses several kinds of administrative documents. Perhaps, the most important are the minutes of meetings of the Council and of the Education Committee which contained vital information about early discussions and decisions on academic and organisational matters. In reading them, we mainly pay attention to the deliberations and resolutions of the governing body on issues including the kind of subjects to be included in the curriculum and how they should be categorised, the appointment and dismissal of professors, and any disputes between professors and students. The idea here is to discover the immediate assumptions about the nature of education beneath the day-to-day administrative deliberation. Apart from minutes of meetings we also rely on several published materials including *The Deed of Settlement of the University of London* (1826), the

first and second statements of the Council, *Charter and By-Laws of King's College London* (1830), and annual reports.

Chapter One

Priestley and Knox: Early Signs of Contestation in the Second half of the Eighteenth-Century

The aim of this chapter is to explore the origins of some of the attitudes which, it is argued in this thesis, signified a challenge to the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education. Previous studies have identified some important changes in eighteenth-century educational practice and thought. [101] However, still working under the assumption that liberal education was primarily an intellectual phenomenon, they generally assume that the notion of liberal education remained uncontested throughout the period. This chapter, however, shows that the development of some antagonistic attitudes towards the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education can be traced back to the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century. An understanding of this development is important because it will give us the chance to later evaluate the significance of the establishment of the London University in relation to the earlier challenges to the notion of traditional education. However, as it is beyond the scope this study to provide a comprehensive account of this development, we shall instead present a case study of the important trajectories for these new educational attitudes.

The case study follows the evolution of Joseph Priestley's educational thought from the publication of his *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education* in 1765 until his later writings and speeches in 1790s. Along the way, we shall come across other influential educational treatises, such as Vicesimus Knox's *Liberal Education*, mostly for the purpose of comparison and contrast with Priestley's educational

[101] See, for instance, Nicholas Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1951).

assumptions. It is true that in terms of sources this chapter mostly relies on formal treatises, which seems to contradict our approach to liberal education as a socio-cultural phenomenon. However, as stressed earlier, the use of these kinds of materials is acceptable as long as the aim is to extract the underlying socio-cultural assumptions inherent in them. It is therefore argued that by exploring the development of the educational thought of Priestley between the 1760s and 1790s, one can see the early formation of a new educational mentality that can be defined in terms of the persistent departure from the issues of gentlemanliness. This departure was mainly manifested in the uses of new social categories as a subject in educational discourse, beginning with 'gentlemen of active life' in the 1760s and the 'middle classes' from the 1770s, both of which were incompatible with the centrality of the notion of the gentleman and gentlemanliness in traditional liberal education.

Joseph Priestley and his *Essay*

Priestley was born to an English Calvinist dissenting family on 13 March 1733, at Birstall Fieldhead, West Riding of Yorkshire. His mother died in 1739 and after the remarriage of his father in 1741, he was sent to live with his father's sister Sarah and her husband John Keighley at Heckmondwike. Sarah wanted him to be a minister, and thus sent him to several local schools in the neighbourhood, most notably the Grammar School at Batley. In 1752, he enrolled at Daventry Academy – one of the well-known dissenting academies at that time – in order to pursue theological studies and remained there until 1755. This phase was vital in Priestley's intellectual development as it paved the way for his later rationally and scientifically oriented

theology. It was here that Priestley first encountered David Hartley's *Observations on Man* (published in 1749) which would continue to influence him throughout his life. It was here, also, that he gradually came to hold heterodox views. By the time he graduated from the academy, Priestley was already an Arian.[102] The graduation was followed by six years ministerial duties at two towns, Needham Market and Nantwhich, where he was detested by local dissenters due to his apparent heterodoxy. Then from 1761 to 1767, Priestley served as a tutor at the dissenting academy at Warrington.[103] His time at this academy was perhaps one of the happiest in Priestley's life, and pivotal in encouraging him to take the issue of education seriously.[104] This led to his active involvement in the improvement of educational practice at the academy. As Robert Schofield suggests, one his great contributions to Warrington was the restructuring of the curriculum; 'Probably the most important of his innovations was the minimizing of language study, except for English, and an emphasis on that of natural history, natural philosophy, and modern history.'[105] It was in order to justify this innovative practice that he wrote and published his famous *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education* (hereafter *Essay*).

[102] In the context of eighteenth-century England, an 'Arian' was a loose label used to describe those who rejected a fundamental aspect of the doctrine of trinity, namely, that Jesus was co-eternal in the same Godhead with God the Father. Rather, he was believed to be created by God, though still divine.

[103] Warrington Academy was a dissenting academy (1756-1782), and is acknowledged as the best of its kind in the second half of the eighteenth century. David Wykes even maintains that the Academy was one of the dissenting academies of the period that 'could rival, and in terms of educational standards, surpass Oxford and Cambridge.' David L. Wykes, 'The Dissenting Academy and Rational Dissent' in Knud Haakonssen (ed.) *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 1996), 110.

[104] David L. Wykes, 'Joseph Priestley, Minister and Teacher', in Isabel Rivers and David L. Wykes (eds.) *Joseph Priestley, Scientist Philosopher and Theologian* (Oxford, 2008), 33.

[105] Robert E. Schofield, 'Priestley, Joseph (1733–1804)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2013 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22788, accessed 27 March 2015].

The motivation behind the publication is clear. In his memoir Priestley told his readers that '[i]n order to recommend such studies as I introduced [at Warrington], I compose an "Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life," with "Syllabuses" of my three new courses of lectures'.[106] The three new courses that Priestley introduced at Warrington were, 'The Study of History and General Policy', 'The History of England', and 'The Constitution and Laws of England'. The introduction of these courses and the creation of the *Essay* were motivated by Priestley's dissatisfaction with the existing educational scheme, especially its inability to prepare students for their future lives. As noted by Thorpe, one of his main worries was that 'whilst most of his pupils were designed for situations in civil and active life, every article in the plan of their education was adapted to the learned.'[107] Prior to the publication of the *Essay*, Priestley had already introduced and taught the new courses. Hence, the publication of the *Essay*, as Priestley saw it, was a way of recommending the courses. By doing this he turned an innovative institutional practice into a systematic educational manifesto.

Dedicated 'to John Lees Esq. President, and to the Rest of the Trustees of the Academy at Warrington,'[108] the *Essay* was published in 1765, alongside two other pieces, a *Plan of Lectures* for the three courses that were newly introduced, and the *Remarks on a Code of Education*, which was a response to Dr John Brown's proposed educational scheme.[109] In this chapter, we primarily concentrate on the

[106]*Memoirs and Correspondence of Joseph Priestley*, ed. John Towill Rutt, 2 vols. (Bristol, 2003), i: 51-52.
[107] T.E. Thorpe, *Joseph Priestley* (London, 1906), 53.
[108] Joseph Priestley, *An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (London, 1765).
[109] The *Remarks* on Dr Brown's educational scheme was the most explicitly political component of the publication. In his memoirs, Priestley acknowledged the significance of the *Remarks* in leading him 'to consider the subject of civil and political liberty' which was later developed into his famous *Essay on Government*. Rutt, *Memoirs and Correspondence*, 52; Peter Miller maintains that

Essay itself, since it contains two conceptual elements that are relevant to our inquiry, namely, the idea of 'active life' and that of 'liberal education'. Basically, the *Essay* argued that there was a need for a special type of liberal education for those who were destined for what Priestley called an active and civil life. It highlighted the inadequacy of the existing scheme of liberal education that prepared students exclusively for learned professions. This criticism was directed at English institutional practice in general, be it of Anglican or dissenting establishments. To overcome the problem, the *Essay* proposed that new subjects should be introduced on the curriculum, i.e., the three subjects that Priestley initiated at Warrington.

Besides proposing new subjects, Priestley also recommended an appropriate method of lecturing. He suggested that a lecturer should 'have a pretty full text before him, digested with care, containing not only a method of discoursing upon the subjects, but also all the principal *arguments* he adduces, and all the leading facts he makes use of to support his hypothesis.' A lecturer ought also to encourage his students 'to enter occasionally into the conversation by proposing queries, or making any objections, or remarks that may occur to them.' Priestley believed that to be effective, a lecture should not exceed 'an hour at a time; with a class not exceeding twenty or thirty.' Finally, it is worth noting that despite his antipathy towards the Church and the establishment, Priestley's tone was ecumenical; in fact, he explicitly stressed the relation between the proposed educational scheme and a sense of patriotism: 'Now the course of instruction I would introduce, would bring the idea of

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Priestley's political thought developed in the subsequent years as an alternative model to Brown's thesis on the relationship between government and individuals. Peter Miller, 'Editorial Introduction', in Peter Miller (ed.) *Joseph Priestley: Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1993), xviii.

our country more early into the minds of British youth, and habituate them to a constant and close attention to it.'[110]

Historians recognise the significance of this *Essay* in various terms. J.W. Ashley Smith, for example, acknowledges the novelty of the scheme in terms of the new subjects that it proposed.[111] Referring to this *Essay* as one of the most frequently published of Priestley's works, Schofield unhesitantly endorses the view that 'Priestley was the most considerable English writer on educational philosophy' between the publication of John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) and Herbert Spencer's 'What Knowledge is of the most worth?' published in the *Westminster Review* in 1859.[112] However, it is still quite difficult to estimate the immediate influence of the *Essay* in the eighteenth century. In fact, recently the historian of dissent, David Wykes, reminds us to take greater precaution when evaluating the significance of such a work on eighteenth-century audiences, since the practices of academies like Warrington, and the educational writings produced by their tutors, like Priestley, were quite isolated from mainstream intellectual culture, and were limited within the confine of nonconformity.[113] However, with this caution in mind, we may still agree with Stephen Burley who regards the *Essay* as 'a work that became an educational manifesto for the liberal dissenting academies.'[114]

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[110] Priestley, *Liberal Education,* 33.
[111] J.W. Ashley Smith, *The Birth of Modern Education: The Contribution of the Dissenting Academies, 1660-1800* (London, 1954).
[112] Robert E. Schofield, *The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley: a Study of His Life and Work From 1733-1773* (Pennsylvania, 1997), 121.
[113] David L. Wykes, 'The Dissenting Academy and Rational Dissent', 133.
[114] Stephen Burley, *New College Hackney: a Selection of Printed and Archival Sources,* 2nd Edition (London, 2011) 56; By liberal dissenting academies he primarily means Warrington and its successors like New College Hackney (1786-1796) and Manchester College York (1803-1840). Historians consider them 'liberal' in contrast to other academies that were more orthodox in orientation. Unlike their orthodox counterparts the liberal academies offered secular or modern subjects like natural philosophy and *Belles Lettres* and admitted students regardless of denominations. The Salters' Hall debate in 1719 is said to have been instrumental in dividing

Despite the attention given by historians to the *Essay*, there is one area that remains unaddressed, namely, its relationship to traditional liberal education. Perhaps the reason why historians have previously been uninterested in this question is because, in spite of the innovative character of his educational scheme, Priestley still considered it to be a programme of liberal education. In fact until the later part of his life Priestley still saw his educational mission as the battle for a liberal education. For example, in a sermon delivered to the students at New College Hackney in 1791, he lamented the fact that 'places of truly *liberal education* in this country are few indeed, compared to the number of those in which youth receive something that is merely called education.'[115] Therefore, this might give the impression that he was adopting the traditional attitude to liberal education. However, this was not really the case. The concept of liberal education in the *Essay* has never been examined on its own terms. We shall now provide a detailed elucidation of what Priestley meant by liberal education, and then show how far it was compatible with the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education.

Priestley's Liberal Education

The immediate relevance of the concept of liberal education to Priestley's intention in writing the *Essay* may be grasped from the following passage:

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dissenters into two groups, orthodox and liberal. After the debate, those who were orthodox identified themselves with the Congregationalists, while those who were liberal preferred Presbyterianism. (Wykes, 'The Dissenting Academy and Rational Dissent', 125).

[115] Joseph Priestley, *The Proper Objects of Education in the Present State of the World* (London, 1791), 4.

> It seems to be a defect in our present system of public education, that a proper course of studies is not provided for gentlemen who are designed to fill the principal stations of *active life* distinct from those which are adapted to the *learned professions* [law, medicine, and ministry] …. We have hardly any medium between an education for the counting house, consisting of writing, arithmetic and merchants' – account and a method of institution in abstract sciences. So that we have nothing liberal, that is worth the attention of gentleman, whose views neither of these two opposite plans may suit.[116]

The focus on 'liberal education' here is understandable as the educational scheme that Priestley wanted to develop was meant for gentlemen. At first sight, this usage seems in line with the general understanding about liberal education in the period. In relation to the history of the dissenting academies in general, historians have identified a concern for providing gentlemanly education among the academies. For instance, Matthew Mercer suggests that science was not taught at dissenting academies such as Warrington and Hackney for utilitarian reasons, but rather 'to enable them to fulfil their destined role as gentlemen and leaders in Dissenting society.'[117] In fact, from the annual reports of the dissenting academies like Manchester College, York, we know that until the early nineteenth century, these institutions still publicly characterized their education as liberal.[118] Since Priestley's motivation in writing the *Essay* was related to his experience as a tutor at the Warrington Academy, its institutional language and practice undoubtedly reinforced his reliance on the notion of liberal education.

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[116] Priestley, *Liberal Education*, 1.
[117] Matthew Mercer, 'Dissenting Academies and the Education of the Laity, 1750-1850', *History of Education*, 30:1 (2001), 43.
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[118] *The Report of Manchester College, York, at the Thirty-First Annual Meeting, August 1, 1817* (York, 1817), 3.

Indeed, prior to the publication of the *Essay*, the concept of liberal education was already entrenched in the institutional language of Warrington. For instance, in its annual report of 1764, the original aim of the establishment was outlined as 'to institute a plan of instruction, upon an open and liberal scheme, where young Gentlemen in general, whether intended for business or any of the learned professions, might receive with advantage at least the former part of their education.'[119] The appreciation of the idea of liberal education in the institutional culture was also related to the celebration of liberal behaviour in the official discourse of the academy. The laws and regulations outlined in the annual report, for instance, mentioned that students were prohibited from 'entering into intimacies with persons of mean and illiberal behaviour, and especially with those of immoral characters,' and they were encouraged to 'observe the highest decency and civility in their behaviour to each other; and to avoid those illiberal familiarities.'[120] This shows how the institutional setting of Priestley's *Essay* was already imbued with a strong sense of being liberal. Given this atmosphere, it is unsurprising that Priestley characterised his educational scheme as comparable in nature. However, this is not to say that he fully subscribed to the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education.

For us to address the question of whether Priestley's idea of liberal education differed from the traditional one at the time, we shall provide a detailed comparison between his *Essay* and another influential educational treatise from the second half of the eighteenth century, Vicesimus Knox's *Liberal Education*. Historians are not unaware of the significance of Knox's treatise in the history of education. For

[119] *A Report of the State of the Warrington Academy, By the Trustees at Their Annual Meeting*, 28th June 1764 (Warrington, 1764), 5.
[120] Ibid., 2.

example, Michele Cohen regards it as an important contribution to the eighteenth-century debate about private and public education. Contrasting it with Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* she described it as 'the strongest voice … in favour of public school education'.[121] It has also been portrayed as representing a different ideological position from that of Priestley's *Essay*. Kimball, for instance, considers *Liberal Education* as a text that belonged to the conservative camp,[122] and as thus opposed to the progressive values enjoined in the educational writings of Priestley.[123] It is argued here that the difference between Priestley's notion of liberal education and that of Knox's can be seen in their contrasting views in relation to two main issues; first, on the role of classics in liberal education and second, on the definition of the concept of a gentleman. Such differences arose from the central presence of the idea of an active life in Priestley's *Essay* and its absence from Knox's *Liberal Education*. It was in this respect that one could say that the educational scheme of Priestley was incompatible with the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education.

Before we begin, let us take a glimpse at Knox and the immediate context surrounding the publication of his work. Knox was the headmaster of Tunbridge School, Kent, from 1778 until 1812, and his *Liberal Education* was in fact dedicated 'TO THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF SKINNERS, THE Patrons of Tunbridge-School.'[124] Before his headmastership, Knox was a fellow at St. John's

[121] Michele Cohen, 'Without Polish, the Rough Diamond Does not Shine: Changing Ideals of Education and the Construction of the Gentleman in Eighteenth-Century England', Walter Göbel, Saskia Schabio and Martin Windisch (eds.), *Engendering Images of Man in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Trier, 2001), 217.
[122] Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: a History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York, 1986), 130.
[123] Ibid., 132.
[124] Vicesimus Knox, *Liberal Education or, a Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning*, 3rd Edition (London, 1781), v.

College Oxford. In 1778, he published his *Essays, Moral and Literary* which would establish his reputation as a writer on conduct. Three years later, he published his *Liberal Education*, a work which, due to its popularity in the period, warrants comparison with Priestley's *Essay*. As noted by the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Knox's *Liberal Education* was 'eagerly purchased by the public,'[125] and 11 editions were published by 1795. In contrast to Priestley's liberal education, Knox's was antithetical to professional and vocational interests. His opinion about professional and vocational education, in relation to liberal education, may be grasped in the following passage:

> There are I think, two kinds of education; one of them confined, the other enlarged; one which only tends to qualify for a particular sphere of action, for a profession, or an official employment; the other, which endeavours to improve the powers of understanding for their own sake; for the sake of exalting the endowments of human nature and becoming capable of sublime and refined contemplation.[126]

Judging by Knox's standards then, Priestley's educational thought was not liberal at all, because it was concerned with what the gentlemen were doing in their professional and occupational lives. Knox, on the other hand, saw the advantage of liberal education beyond the role of a gentleman in his professional activity, as when he said that it 'furnishes a power of finding satisfactory amusement for those hours of solitude.'[127] Critical to his model of liberal education was an extremely important attitude that would persist in the dominant understanding of liberal education until the early twentieth century, namely, the reverence towards the classics.

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[125] Philip Carter, S. J. Skedd, 'Knox, Vicesimus (1752–1821)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15792, accessed 27 March 2015].
[126] Knox, *Liberal Education*, 8.
[127] Ibid., 9.

Like many traditionalists, Knox stressed the importance of classics in forming a gentleman: the 'enlargement, refinement, and embellishment of the mind, is the best and noblest effect of classical discipline.'[128] He thought that classical education 'is not only desirable, as it qualifies the mind for this profession or for that occupation; but as it opens a source of pure pleasure unknown to the vulgar'. Knox further stressed that even if that education was 'not the best preparation for every employment above the low and the mechanical … it is in itself most valuable, as it tends to adorn and improve human nature, and to give the ideas a noble elevation'.[129] By saying liberal or classical education prepares a man for this or that profession, Knox did not mean it qualified him in the sense of ensuring his technical efficiency for future work. Rather he meant that it enlarged the personality of the man himself. Some reviewers of Knox's treatise were quick to criticise its strong emphasis on classics, which they regarded as a sign of its traditionalist outlook. One of them accused him of 'being strangely prejudiced against all innovations' and of continuing to abide 'by old errors, rather than adopt any improvements that are new.'[130] Another reviewer, though less critical, remarked that 'there be no new or striking observations in the present Treatise.'[131]

How does this compare, then, to Priestley's view of classics? Historian, John Seed, remarks that 'It is only too easy to forget that Greek and Latin were basic elements of the courses at both Warrington and Hackney' and maintains that 'even the anti-traditionalist Joseph Priestley had declared in 1790 that the aim of dissenting education was "to make a good classical scholar as the necessary foundation of

[128] Knox, *Liberal Education*, 4.
[129] Ibid.
[130] 'Book Review', *London Magazine*, 50 (March 1781), 142.
[131] 'Liberal Education', *Westminster Magazine* (Mar., 1781), 150.

everything else".'[132] It is clear that in the *Essay* Priestley did not oppose classical education. He advised potential students that prior to taking his course of liberal education 'a knowledge of the learned languages is not absolutely necessary, but is very desirable; especially such an insight into Latin' as would enable them 'to read the easier classics, and supersede the use of a dictionary, with respect to those more difficult English words which are derived from the Latin.'[133] However, it could still be argued that the sense of respect for classics in the dissenting academies and Priestley's thought was not as entrenched as it was at Oxbridge and other institutions offering a traditional liberal education. In his *Address to the Dissenters on Classical Literature* (1789),[134] E. Cogan said that, although 'The Dissenting interest has supported names which are an honour to the list of English Critics and Divines … truth obliges me to declare, that Classical Science by no means flourishes amongst us as a body.'[135] It was for this reason that he felt the need to address the dissenters on the subject. In his eyes, dissenting academies lacked what Oxford and Cambridge had, namely, the connections with public schools like Westminster and Eton. These schools were instrumental in supplying the ancient universities with students who were accomplished in classical languages.[136] Therefore, he proposed that the same type of institutions should also be established as feeder schools to the academies.[137] This concern clearly shows how contemporaries were aware that dissenting

[132] John Seed, "Manchester College, York: An Early Nineteenth Century Dissenting Academy" in *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 14:1 (1982), 10; Historian, Ruth Watts seems to share this view as she stresses that eighteenth-century innovative educational thinkers such as Priestley did not ignore classics, rather they used them in a different way 'reducing the time spent on them and studying instead 'modern' subjects like modern history (which might include commerce and business studies), English literature and modern languages — curriculum reform in short.' Ruth Watts, 'Some Radical Educational Networks of the Late Eighteenth Century and Their Influence', *History of Education*, 27:1 (1998), 1.
[133] Priestley, *Liberal Education,* 18-19.

[134] Interestingly this is also one of the texts that Seed uses to stress that the dissenters valued classical languages
[135] E. Cogan, *An Address to the Dissenters on Classical Literature* (London, 1789) 10-11.
[136] Ibid., 12.
[137] Ibid., 13.

academies were hardly comparable to Oxford and Cambridge in terms of their respect for classics.

As a subject, classics was taught at the academies and cherished in their official publications, but it was not really entrenched in their institutional culture. For instance, in a letter to John Seddon, the secretary of Warrington Academy, a parent of a student wrote, 'I would chuse he Shd. [sic] Drop the Greek and Latin Lectures, [so] that he may have more time to apply to such others as you think most necessary.' He would rather 'have him attend the French Lectures – the mathematical and philosophical class, the Belles Lettres and composition in English', primarily because 'he Shd. improve himself in such manner as may fit him for Mercantile Business.'[138] This shows how, even after the publication of Priestley's *Essay,* parents could still bargain their choice of subjects at Warrington Academy, where classics was merely regarded as an optional one, not a necessary requirement for the education of gentlemen. Furthermore, the letter revealed how classics were deemed irrelevant for preparing students for the career options available to them. Even after the demise of Warrington Academy, succeeding schools including New College Hackney were sometimes criticized for their neglect of classics. In his memoirs, written after his controversial resignation as a classical tutor at New College Hackney, Gilbert Wakefield, who had previously served at Warrington, admitted that classical literature 'is very imperfectly known among the *dissenters*.'[139]

[138] Dr. William's Library, John Seddon Papers, 38. 103.105, Richard Hare to John Seddon, Cork, 26 August 1768.

[139] Gilbert Wakefield, *Memoirs of the Life of Gilbert Wakefield: Written by Himself* (London, 1792), 358.

The place that classics occupied in Priestley's *Essay* was a reflection of its status at dissenting academies. For instance, though he acknowledged the importance of classics, especially Latin, Priestley did not accord it a superior position to other modern languages; rather he seems to place it on a par with them.[140] He emphasised the need for students to improve their English, for example, as daily conversations on subjects such as commerce, modern history and policy are held 'in our own tongue', and 'little is even written in a foreign or dead language'.[141] This attitude towards classics was hardly in agreement with the dominant understanding of liberal education in this period. As the previous chapter suggests, we should look beyond disciplinary categories in determining the cultural boundaries in the educational discourse of the period, including the divide between traditionalism and anti-traditionalism. In other words, a mere acknowledgement of the importance of classics did not make a person traditionalist; rather, one should carefully examine how the value of classics was articulated by that person, especially in relation to other subjects. This discussion shows that Priestley's liberal education differed from the traditional one in terms of its view of classics. In the next part, we will relate this difference between Priestley and Knox to the way in which the concept of a gentleman was used in their treatises. This is due to the fact that whether they thought classics were uniquely powerful subjects that could shape a gentleman, or that they were just one of many subjects that might be useful to his employment, such views were based on their underlying assumptions about gentlemen and gentlemanliness.

[140] Priestley, *Liberal Education*, 18-19.
[141] Ibid., 23.

On Gentleman and Gentlemanliness

Steven Shapin claims that Priestley's *Essay* was one of the texts that postulated a new model of gentility that suited 'the circumstances and goals of mercantile and manufacturing dissenters.' This model reflected the emergence of the 'new men' who valued mechanical arts and modern education.[142] This study agrees with Shapin that the *Essay* projected a new meaning of a gentleman. Its main concern, however, is to explore this reorientation towards the idea of liberal education. Before we look at how far Knox and Priestley differed on this subject, let us acknowledge that both of them agreed, on virtually the same grounds, in excluding the lower orders from their respective schemes of liberal education. Knox, for instance, thought that liberal education should not be offered to those who were 'to be trained to a subordinate trade, or to some low and mechanical employment, in which a refined taste and comprehensive knowledge would divert his attention from his daily occupation.'[143] In similar fashion, Priestley remarked that members of the lower orders were unsuitable for liberal education because 'the mechanical parts of any employment will be best performed by persons who have no knowledge or idea of anything beyond mere practice'. For him, a mechanic should concentrate solely on his object of employment since 'having no further, or higher views, he will more contentedly and chearfully [sic] give his whole time to his proper object.'[144] This means that Priestley was not bothered by, and in fact perpetuated, the same rhetoric of exclusion that we find in the traditional discourse of liberal education. What this similarity between Knox's and Priestley's liberal education tells us is that the

[142] Steven Shapin, 'A Scholar and a Gentleman: The Problematic Identity of the Scientific Practitioner in Early Modern England', *History of Science*, 29 (1991), 313.

[143] Knox, *Liberal Education*, 30.

[144] Joseph Priestley, 'A Syllabus of a Course of Lecture on the Study of History' printed with *An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life*, 19-20.

contest over the nature of liberal education was fought exclusively between the social groups above the 'lower orders' and that their difference on the concept of gentleman and gentlemanliness was one of the aspects of this contest.

In agreement with the traditional outlook, Knox's gentlemen were primarily conceived of as moral beings, rather than members of a particular occupation. Knox frequently used verbs such as 'form' and 'constitute' when describing the task of liberal education, as when he claimed that, 'classical learning tends most directly to form the true gentleman.'[145] However, this is not to suggest that Knox assumes his gentlemen would be free from any employment throughout their lives. Rather, for him the concern with liberal education was prior to any preoccupation with employment. It was assumed that once a man was liberally educated, he would be ready to face the world, and gainful employment was a mere part of it. What liberal education in this sense granted to young men, were not skills or knowledge to be exclusively applied when he was engaged in a particular career, but rather an enlarged character, or in Knox's terms, a mind that would last with him. Hence, when talking about magistrates and other public officers, he wrote that though they might 'qualify themselves for the desk [public offices] … they should recollect, that they are not to remain there always', and therefore they should 'let their minds be early imbued with that elegance, which will remain with them, and constitute them gentlemen, whatever may be their employment.'[146]

In contrast to Knox, Priestley regarded 'gentlemen' as 'gentlemen' by the virtue of their employment as magistrates, legislators, merchants etc. Therefore, in regards to

[145] Knox, *Liberal Education*, 6.

[146] Ibid., 148-149.

education, his main concern was how to prepare students so as to make them efficient in their future employment or work activities: 'the studies of youth should tend to fit us for the business of manhood; and the objects of our attention, and turn of thinking in younger life should not be too remote from the destined employment of our riper years.'[147] In contrast to the formative emphasis of traditional liberal education, Priestley was not preoccupied with the question of forming a true gentleman. As he took it for granted that there were gentlemen out there, defined in terms of their occupations, Priestley therefore thought that for an education to be called liberal it had to serve their activities in the world of employment. In doing this, he not only highlighted active life as a living experience distinct from the one lived by the learned, but he also introduced into the educational discourse a new category that referred to those who participated in it, 'gentlemen of active life'. Priestley's concept of gentlemen of active life was incompatible with the assumptions about gentlemen and gentlemanliness in the discourse of traditional liberal education. In order to understand this, let us look into the ideological and cultural baggage carried by the notion of active life itself.

Since ancient times, and most influentially in the works of Aristotle, active life had been contrasted to the contemplative life. The meaning of this contrast, however, varied throughout history. For instance, under the influence of Augustine of Hippo, early Italian humanists such as Collucio Salutati (d. 1406) understood it as referring to two dimensions of one self.[148] The contrast was also used in the humanist debate in England and France over the question of whether scholars should remain outside

[147] Priestley, *Liberal Education*, 5.
[148] Robert A. Bonnell, 'An Early Humanistic View of Active and Contemplative Life', *Italica*, 43:3, (Sept. 1966), 225-239

the court or be involved in politics as personal advisers to kings.[149] In the same year as the publication of Priestley's *Essay,* a work entitled *An Essay on an Active and Contemplative Life* was posthumously published, bearing the name Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (d. 1674). It criticised the scholars or schoolmen whom he regarded as 'being purely and merely men of contemplation' and despised the fact that 'they assume the title of being *learned* and *subtle,* and what other title they will, but of being good for anything.'[150] This clearly shows that by the time Priestley wrote his *Essay* the notion of active life was already a concept imbued with a strong ideological and polemical significance. Therefore, our next step is to consider whether the concept of active life, as used in the *Essay,* served any critical function.

Priestley was quite clear what he meant by active life. 'Within the departments of *active life,'* he wrote, 'I suppose to be comprehended all those stations in which a man's conduct will considerably affect the liberty and the property of his countrymen, and the riches, the strength, and the security of his country.' By this he meant not only the 'gentleman of large property' who usually run the government as magistrates and legislators, but leaders and managers of every profession and vocation, whether the law, the military or trade. 'Divines and Physicians' were excluded from this description as their professions were not directly related to the preservation of liberty and property, and they were only interested in such issues as 'gentlemen and general scholars'. [151] Since his view set Law apart from Divinity and Physic, Priestley's description of active life broke up the traditional category of the liberal professions. In the full title of the *Essay,* he equated active life with civil life,

[149] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought,* 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1978), i. 217 -219.
[150]Earl of Clarendon, *An Essay on an Active and Contemplative Life: and Why the One should be Preferred over the other* (Glasgow, 1765), 50-51.
[151] Priestley, *Liberal Education*, 9.

which seems to suggest that what he had in mind was a group of gentlemen who served the interests of the state. However, as George Brauer suggests, this kind of emphasis on civic duties as a gentlemanly ideal, common in the Renaissance, had started to wane in the time of the Restoration, and was virtually absent by the eighteenth century.[152] As service to the state was an uncommon theme of active life in Priestley's period, the defining element of his idea of active life appears to have been its contrast to scholarly life.

Priestley did criticise the learned and their education. His main objection to them was their alleged remoteness from the world of the unlearned public, and he believed that they should enter into discussion with lay people about themes like commerce, arts and manufactures.[153] However, it is also important to keep in mind that, despite this criticism, Priestley still believed that an education for the learned should have its place. The learned, for him, were also gentlemen, and their education was still liberal; only that, unlike those gentlemen he was responsible for (his students at Warrington), they were not destined for active life. This means that Priestley was less polemical than Clarendon in his use of the concept of active life. Whereas the Earl exploited the contra-scholarly element inherent in the concept in order to ridicule scholars, Priestley's use was driven by his concern to single out a mode of life different from the one lived by the learned. This singling out, in turn, enabled him to justify his case for the need for a special type of education for those who were intended for that kind of life. His anti-scholarly attitude of life was further exhibited in his occasional reference to the gentlemen of active life as men of business whom

[152] George C. Brauer, *The Education of a Gentleman: Theories of Gentlemanly Education in England, 1660-1775* (New York,, 1959), 35.
[153] Priestley, *Liberal Education*, 22-23.

he contrasted with men of science.[154] This reference was not without significance. In the wider culture of the period, the designation 'man of business' carried a strong anti-scholarly connotation. An article entitled 'Man of Letters and Man of Business', for instance, observed the stark contrast between the two personality types: the man of business 'makes himself a continual drudge to his profession, and will not allow letters and study a reasonable avocation' while the scholar and philosopher 'looks down with contempt on the grovelling creature whose soul is confined to the same circle with trade.'[155] In another article, 'The Philosopher and the Man of Business', an author contrasted the universal appeal of philosophical pursuit to the limited utility of industry and business.[156] These examples show that the contrast between the man of business and the man of learning was entrenched in contemporary assumption. Therefore, the fact that Priestley referred to his gentleman of active life as a man of business strengthens our claim that the defining aspect of his idea of active life was its anti -scholarly element.

One significant feature of his men of business or gentlemen of active life was that they were expected to balance theory and practice. 'This character' he stressed 'is not the child of instruction and theory only; but, on the other hand, neither it is the mere offspring of practice without instruction.'[157] Priestley was aware that some men of business were anxious that the speculative and theoretical focus of education 'unfits men for business'. He confessed that they were right to be anxious 'if those speculations be foreign to their employments.' Basically he agreed that 'a turn for poetry and the *belles lettres* might hurt a tradesman, that the study of natural

[154] Ibid., 15.
[155] 'The Man of Letters and the Man of Business', *Oxford Magazine*, Sept., 1771; 7, 104.
[156] Humilis, 'The Philosopher and the Man of Business', *Monthly Visitor*, May, 1800; 10, 22-27
[157] Priestley, *Liberal Education*, 15.

philosophy might interfere with the practice of the law, and metaphysics and the abstract sciences with the duty of a soldier.' It was clear that these studies did not match the respective future employment of their students. However, it is wrong to say a 'counsellor can be unfitted for his practice by a taste for the study of the law. Or that a commander would be the worse soldier for studying books written on the art of war.'[158] Hence, there was nothing wrong with theory or learning as long as it supported respective occupations. However, this also implied that for education to remain relevant, it had to treat gentlemen according to what they were going to do in the world of employment. It was in this respect that the gentlemanly persona envisioned by the *Essay* did not match the image of the gentleman portrayed in traditional liberal education, i.e., as a moral being whose worth resided not in his mundane occupation, but in his character.

To understand the cultural trajectory of Priestley's conception of liberal education, we need to explore the subsequent development in the reformist educational discourse that was partly built upon the core themes and concepts set out by the *Essay*. This development suggests that not only was Priestley's idea of liberal education for active life taken up afterwards, but that in some respects those who took up his idea shifted even further away from the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education. By the 1780s there was greater impetus for extending liberal education to the manufacturing classes, especially in Manchester. The main platform for such a call was the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, of which Priestley alongside Erasmus Darwin, Josiah Wedgwood and several others, became honorary members. On 9 April 1783, Thomas Barnes addressed the Society

[158] Priestley, *Liberal Education*, 19.

with ‘A Plan for the Improvement and Extension of Liberal Education in Manchester’. Barnes was a graduate of Warrington himself, and like Priestley, a Unitarian. It could be argued that due to the enthusiastic reception that his address received and the practical outcome that it brought about, this address can be regarded as one the most important manifestos for reformed liberal education after Priestley’s *Essay* itself.

The most remarkable development that we can identify from this speech was the increasing tendency to equate active life with commercial life. As Priestley had done in his *Essay*, Barnes devoted the early part of his address to highlighting the problems with the existing educational culture. He complained that it was difficult to find ‘those who have united, the manners of the Gentleman, the taste of the Scholar, and the industry of Tradesman’ in themselves. The reason for this, he argued, was because ‘those places of education, which tend to form the Gentleman and the Scholar, have been unfriendly to the habits necessary to the Tradesman; whilst the warehouse, in which he receives his mercantile mould, is, perhaps, equally unfavourable to superior ornaments.’ In order to overcome this problem, Barnes envisioned a better educational scheme that connected ‘TOGETHER, LIBERAL SCIENCE AND COMMERCIAL INDUSTRY!’ He believed that such an educational experiment had never been tried before. However, for him, no matter how visionary it might sound, this project ‘deserves a trial’.[159] Barnes then pointed out the importance of some modern subjects for the scheme and how they would improve the business culture. Chemistry and Mechanics, for instance, were

[159] Thomas Barnes, ‘A Plan for the Improvement and Extension of Liberal Education in Manchester’, *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, 2 vols. (Warrington, 1785), ii. 21.

considered a 'very important part of the plan' due to 'their intimate connection with our manufactures.'[160]

As a follow up to Barnes' speech, a member of the Society proposed the establishment of an institution for liberal education in Manchester. His paper echoed Priestley's concern when it stressed that 'something essential is still wanting among us, to compleat the course of education, for active and commercial life.'[161] It was maintained that the aim of the new educational institution was not only to improve the morality, piety and happiness of each student but also to ensure that he gained 'early habits of commercial industry.' In line with Barnes' vision to unite liberal science and commercial industry under one educational programme, it was claimed that the 'design of this plan is, to connect the improvement of the mind, with the proper attentions to business.'[162] As we can see, this development in Manchester reflected a gradual contraction of the meaning of active life to the realm of business and commerce, and consequently marginalised those from other occupational sectors such as magistrates and legislators. No doubt, the industrial atmosphere of the northern city itself contributed to this contraction.

It could be further argued that this increasing call for liberal education to accommodate commercial interests signified a further departure from the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education. One of the main indicators was that the potential students of this educational scheme were no longer referred to as gentlemen, but simply as manufacturers and tradesmen. It was believed that by

[160] Ibid., 22.
[161] 'Proposals for Establishing in Manchester a Plan of Liberal Education, for young Men designed for CIVIL and ACTIVE LIFE', *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, 2 vols. (Warrington, 1785), ii. 31.
[162] Ibid., 37.

attaining a liberal education a tradesmen would 'appear with greater consequence and respectability' to his friends and customers.[163] Clearly, by primarily referring to its constituency as gentlemen, Priestley's *Essay* was relatively closer to traditional liberal education than the later discourse developed in Manchester. In other words, the *Essay*, despite some of its innovative features, still shared with traditional liberal education a focus on gentlemen as the proper subject for educational discourse. In contrast, the reformist discourse in Manchester, despite retaining Priestley's emphasis on active life as a distinctive living experience that should be treated in its own terms, no longer bothered to claim or justify its scheme as liberal or suitable for gentlemen only. This indifference towards the issue of gentlemanliness signified a deeper rupture with tradition. However, as Priestley himself occasionally referred to his gentlemen of active life as men of business, it is certainly plausible to assume that there were already signs of this commercial attitude in his *Essay*. If we follow the development of his educational thought from the 1770s and onwards we can see the disappearance of 'gentlemen of active life', and the emergence of 'middle classes' as a new category for its attention. This development suggests that Priestley's educational thought was moving further away from the traditional question of what kind of education suited gentlemen.

From Gentlemen of Active Life to the Middle Classes

In 1778, while serving as a personal librarian and literary companion to the Earl of Shelburne, Priestley published *Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education* [hereafter *Observations*]. A notable feature that distinguished this new publication from the previous *Essay* was the absence of the category 'gentlemen of active life',

[163] Ibid.

and the appearance of a new one, 'middle classes'. However, despite this shift in wording, there was an underlying conceptual continuity with the earlier work. There were two ways in which the middle classes resembled gentlemen of active life. First, their mode of living was itself defined by activities associated with active life i.e., business and employment. For example, in *Observations*, Priestley talked about how the virtue of middle-class life can be defined in terms of its members always being in the state of employment. Leisure always degenerates, and 'it is serious business only that makes amusement pleasant …. Constant employment is likewise necessary to preserve the body in health, without which the most ample fortunes can avail us nothing.'[164] The second reason is that, just like gentlemen of active life, Priestley's middle classes were also differentiated from the members of lower classes by virtue of their commanding or managerial roles. As Priestley stressed, unlike the middle classes, the lower members 'have very little to command.'[165]

The idea of middle classes in Priestley's later educational treatise, however, had greater normative significance than that of the gentlemen of active life of his *Essay*. In April 1791, in his lecture to the students of New College Hackney, Priestley explicitly emphasized the educational potential of the middle classes of whom he believed that 'the converts to Christianity in the early ages consisted.' For him, the lowest classes 'will not easily be brought to think on subjects that are wholly *new* to them', while people 'in the highest classes of life … are chiefly swayed by their connections, and very seldom have the courage to think and act for themselves.'[166] This valuation of the middle classes implies that the social category was slightly different from the earlier 'gentlemen of active life'. When he singled out gentlemen

[164] Joseph Priestley, *Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education,* (Bath, 1778), 132-133.
[165] Ibid., 128.
[166] Priestley, *Proper Objects of Education,* 37-38.

of active life as a distinctive category, Priestley did not really cherish the value of the gentlemen by the virtue of their active life; rather he was trying to let people know that there were gentlemen of active life whose interests required a different type of liberal education.

It is hard to identify what caused this shift. Unlike the previous *Essay* and *Observations,* it is evident that this presentation contained explicit political allusions. In the talk, Priestley several times praised the French Revolution and encouraged the British youth 'to enter the lists with the heroes abroad, who have adopted these new and great objects of civil policy.'[167] He also explicitly criticized Oxford and Cambridge by saying that they never produced great minds: Isaac Newton 'did not learn his system of the world from Cambridge', and the philosopher Locke 'was so far from being anything that he learned at our universities.'[168] It is therefore unsurprising that the address was regarded by some contemporaries as politically subversive. Samuel Turner, for instance, in his published *Letter to Joseph Priestley,* claimed that he found in the talk 'an infamous libel on the two universities of this land, and a scandalous and seditious attack on government.'[169] Indeed, this speech was delivered in the midst of one of the most politically tense moments of Priestley's life. As Schofield notes, since settling in Birmingham in 1780, there had been 'a persistent, deliberate attempt to inflame popular opinion against him'.[170]

[167] Ibid., 33.
[168] Ibid, 6.
[169] Samuel Turner, *A Letter To Joseph Priestley, on His Discourse Delivered on Wednesday, April 27, 1791, to the Supporters of the New College at Hackney* (London, 1791) 2.

[170] Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley*, 264.

His memoir reveals that at least two years before the lecture, Priestley's main concern was the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.[171] Furthermore, most of his correspondence for the two or three months prior to the sermon at the New College Hackney (January-February 1791) revealed his preoccupation with the Revolution in France.[172] Hence, Priestley's assertion in the address of the value of the middle class at the expense of the aristocracy might have been reinforced by the increasing anti-aristocratic sentiment engendered by the Revolution and the politically tense atmosphere of the period. As Ruth Watts has rightly argued, when referring to Priestley and Richard Price in this period, '[t]hey disliked the aristocracy, preferring the morality of the middle classes whose talents they were confident would supply the country's need.'[173] The main concern here is with the fact that this new emphasis on middle-class educational potential developed not only out of the recognition of the distinctive sense of life that they claimed to embody, but also from a conviction of their superiority over aristocrats as well as the lower orders.

Priestley was one of the earliest scholars to use the concept 'middle classes' in educational analysis and reform. The nature of this usage reflected a changing attitude towards traditional liberal education as it replaced the old understanding of educational potential based on the dichotomous gentleman/vulgar status distinction, with a new argument grounded in the tripartite differentiation between upper, middle and lower orders. Priestley's emphasis on the educational potential of the

[171] Rutt, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Joseph Priestley*, 4; According to Schofield, Priestley saw his activism over the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts as religious, while his opponents saw it as political. (Schofield, *The Enlightened Joseph Priestley*, 268).
[172] Rutt, *Memoirs and Correspondence of Joseph Priestley*, 98-103.
[173] Ruth Watts, 'Revolution and Reaction: Unitarian Academies, 1780-1800', *History of Education*, 20:4 (1991), 322

middle classes and his ridicule of aristocrats suggests that the usage was hardly in agreement with the traditional social customs. This development was parallel to the growth of middle-class identity in opposition to the values of the upper classes. Previously, the middling sorts, despite being classified as a different social group from the elites, had a strong tendency to ape 'the manners and morals of the gentry.'[174] As Barry suggests, it was only towards the end of the eighteenth century through 'the Industrial Revolution and the rise of provincial cities' that 'a middle class emerge with interests and values self-consciously opposed to that of the landed elite.'[175] It is also not difficult to see the affinity between Priestley's shift towards middle-class education, and the narrowing of the meaning of active life to commercial life as reflected in the discourse in Manchester.

As Margaret Hunt maintains, terms like 'middling sorts', 'middling classes' and 'commercial classes' were employed in the eighteenth century 'more or less interchangeably to refer to shopkeepers, manufacturers, better-off independent artisans, civil servants, professionals, lesser merchants, and the like.'[176] In the wider culture of the period, especially towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was an obvious propensity to see commercial life as equivalent to middle-class life. For instance, a work entitled *Observations on a Course of Instruction, for Young Persons in the Middle Classes of Life* by Samuel Catlow (published in 1795) was readily taken by the reviewer in *The Critical Review* as intended for those who were

[174] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727 – 1783* (Oxford, 1989), 67; Jonathan Barry, 'Introduction', in Jonathan Barry & Christopher Brooks (eds.) *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1994), 6.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Margaret Hunt, *The Middlling Sort: Commerce, Gender and Family in England 1680-1780* (London, 1996), 15

destined for commercial life.[177] Hence, Dror Wahrman is not entirely right when he claims that 'throughout the 1790s there was nothing inherently commercial – or urban – in the conceptualization of a 'middle class.' The fact that Catlow changed the title of his work in 1798 to *Outlines of a Plan of Instruction, Adapted to the Varied purpose of Active Life,* again reflected the strong interconnection between a commercial life, an active life and a middle-class life. As it increasingly acquired a more commercial sense, the notion of active life, throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, continued to be utilized as an expression of hostility towards the scholarly and learned dimension of traditional liberal education. For instance, in 1800, the dissenter John Aikin – who was educated at Warrington in the late 1750s – ridiculed what he called 'men of virtuous principles', because they have 'been too much afraid of contaminating them by entering into active life, and have listened too readily to the siren strains of poets and philosopher, who have praised the silent vale of retirement as the true abode of pure and exalted virtue.'[178]

This chapter has shown that by following the development of the educational thought of Priestley from his *Essay* in 1765 through to his later writings in 1790s, we can see the early formation of a new educational mentality that can be defined in terms of a continuous estrangement from the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education. This account of the development terminates with the novel use of 'middle-classes' as a new category of educational thought that could potentially contest the old outlook based on the gentlemen/vulgar status distinction. However, this development still had its limitations since the middle classes in the period were yet to be widely accepted as the representative of reform and change.

[177] 'Catlow's Observations on a Course of Instruction', *Critical Review,* 14 (June 1795), 181 – 182.
[178] John Aikin, *Letters from a Father to His son, On Various Topics Relative to Literature and the Conduct of Life*, 2 vols. (London, 1800), ii. 47.

As Wahrman notes, although the category 'middle classes' had acquired a more political and polemical connotation by the 1790s, it was not until the 1820s that it began to be fully associated with the idioms of social transformation such as 'improvement' and 'progress'.[179] It is for this reason that in order to see how this break with traditional liberal education was brought to a new level we shall in the next chapter move into the 1820s. However, in terms of the picture being painted here, there was more to the 1820s than just a wider socio-cultural acceptance of middle classes as agents of change. We shall demonstrate that the period significantly differed from the era of Priestley because it witnessed two important developments in political and intellectual culture that eroded the traditional sense of being liberal. First, there was a rise of political liberalism, and second, the growing socio-cultural influence of political economy.

[179] Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: the Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), 236-237.

Chapter Two

Liberalism and Political Economy: Challenges to the Traditional Sense of Being Liberal in the 1820s

The aim of this chapter is to explain why the socio-cultural atmosphere of the 1820s in general was relatively unfavourable to assumptions of traditional liberal education. It is argued that there were two important developments in the wider political and intellectual culture of the period that effectively contested the paternalist picture of social relations, and thus weakened the cultural integrity of the old sense of being liberal. First, there was the emergence of liberalism as a political sentiment that not only reflected a new sense of political affiliation but also deemed, however implicitly, status hierarchy as a less important element in politics; and second, the cultural ascendancy of political economy which provided an alternative normative framework of social relations that contested the paternalist practice of deference and benevolence. These developments eroded some of the core elements of gentlemanly culture, and consequently generated an atmosphere that was conducive to a serious and unprecedented challenge to traditional liberal education. In the final part of this chapter we shall discuss the connection between these cultural developments and the establishment of the London University.

Political Liberalism

Frederick Rosen maintains that in the 1820s, 'the word "liberal" with its specifically political meaning … passed into the English language from the Spanish *liberales*

and began to be used to describe a political movement and doctrine.'[180] Another historian, Joseph Coohil also suggests that '[i]n the sense of having certain political opinions and behaving in certain ways politically, "liberal" has been in use in Britain since the 1820s'.[181] However, 'liberal' here was a political sentiment that might transfer across parties, rather than a coherent ideology for any political affiliation. Before the 1830s, being liberal in politics was not a party label but an attitude of mind that subscribed to some basic principles such as 'a belief in the ideals of civil and religious liberty expressed through support for such measures as the repeal of the *Test and Corporation Acts* and Catholic emancipation'.[182] Historians are also aware that the new political meaning of liberal differed from the eighteenth-century sense, understood as becoming a gentleman and not being low in birth, which was the conceptual bedrock of liberal education.[183] However, the impact of the new understanding on the old one, especially in regards to liberal educational culture has not been seriously explored. The lack of the history of the usage of the word 'liberal' itself is a sign of this inattentiveness. As D.M. Craig complains, '[t]he extensive revisionist literature on the politics and ideas of liberalism has surprisingly little to say about word-usage.'[184]

It is suggested here that, more than just being different from the old sense of being liberal, the new liberal sentiment was also instrumental in problematizing its social overtones. This engagement took place on the political front as the old assumption

[180] Frederick Rosen, 'Nationalism and Early British Liberal Thought', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 2:2 (1997), 177.
[181] Joseph Coohil, 'Liberal Terms and Liberal Labels', *Parliamentary History*, 30 (October 2011), 14.
[182] T.A. Jenkins, *The Liberal Ascendancy 1830-1886* (London, 1994), 45.
[183] D.M. Craig, 'The Origins of liberalism in Britain: The Case of *The Liberal*', *Historical Research*, 85:229 (August 2012), 477; Rosen, 'Nationalism and Early British Liberal Thought', 177; for the study of the content of *The Liberal* see Daisy Hay, 'Liberal, Liberales and *The Liberal*: a reassessment', *European Romantic Review*, 19:4 (October 2008), 307-320.
[184] Craig, 'The Origins of Liberalism in Britain,' 469.

among Whigs and Tories that politics was the privilege of aristocrats[185] was incompatible with the new political sentiment that was less respectful of status hierarchy. This is usefully illustrated in the preface of the first issue of the magazine *The Liberal* (1822), written by Leigh Hunt, the editor. Historical opinion is divided on this preface. Daisy Hay regards it as representing a move from patriotic liberalism to international liberalism, both of which were political;[186] Rosen, on the other hand, suggests that Hunt's preface 'endorsed the older notion of liberal knowledge and learning, but seemed more ambivalent about liberalism in a political sense.'[187] However, although in the preface Hunt mainly referred to liberality as generosity – thus seeming to use it in the old sense – he actually treated it in a strictly political sense, therefore, divesting it of any traditional social overtones. The editor despised the fact that the pretentious rhetoric of social generosity and superiority among politicians obscured real political problems. He ridiculed the sentiment that 'there are good hearted fellows in all parties, and that the great business is to balance them properly; and let Governments go on as they do, have done and will do forever.'[188] It was wrong, Hunt asserted, 'to confound all parties themselves with one another, which is the real end of pretended liberalities, and assume that none of them are a jot better or worse than the other, and may contain just as good and generous people…'[189] He instead applied the distinction between liberal and illiberal in a strictly political rather than social sense. For instance, Hunt condemned Lord Castlereagh as 'one of the most illiberal and vindictive of

[185] The classic example from the 1820s was the bafflement of aristocratic Whigs like Earl Grey over the appointment of George Canning, whose mother was an actress, as Prime Minister. From this viewpoint, to endorse his premiership was to 'recognize the claims of mere talents', and to ignore the longstanding belief that 'attributes of birth and wealth must always overbear simple talent.' Leslie Mitchell, *The Whig World 1760-1837* (London, 2005), 34.
[186] Hay, 'Liberal, Liberales and The Liberal', 311.
[187] Frederick Rosen, *Bentham, Byron, and Greece: Constitutionalism, Nationalism, and Early Liberal Political Thought* (Oxford, 1992), 302-303.
[188] [Hunt], 'Preface', *The Liberal*, 1 (1822), x.
[189] Ibid.

statesmen … whom a bad system swells for a time into a part of its unnatural greatness.' For him, Castlereagh's 'six acts', which included the increase of taxation on printed materials like pamphlets and periodicals, were the prime example of illiberal policy.[190] He stressed that 'it is one thing to be liberal in behalf of the many, and another thing to be exclusively so in behalf of the few.'[191] This politicisation of the meaning of liberal suggests that the preface actually signified one of the earliest expressions of a more politically engaged understanding of 'being liberal' which the later liberalism takes for granted. Critics were quick to notice that the meaning of 'liberal' employed by Hunt and his new periodical was actually a deviation from the traditional sense of the term. In a review of *The Liberal*, one writer began by reminding his readers that '[a]mong the definitions of the adjective *liberal*, it is laid down to mean "not low in mind; becoming a gentleman",' and then stressed that 'men of all political parties and religious persuasions, endued with the common feelings of humanity, will come to the conclusion that its [the periodical] import is the very opposite to that of the adjective'.[192] Another critic suggested that the term 'Liberal' in *The Liberal* 'evidently means licentious, the utterers of licentious language; in which sense the title of the Pisan Periodical is quite correct'.[193]

As the decade progressed, the political use of the world liberal became increasingly widespread. Contemporaries began to talk about the Liberal System, which referred not to a set of values such as generosity or gentlemanliness, but to a particular political disposition; reformist, if not radical in character.[194] This new understanding of liberal was also evident in the tendency to use the adjective in describing the

[190] Ibid., xi.
[191] Ibid.
[192] 'The Liberal', *Literary Gazette*, 300 (Oct. 19, 1822), 655.
[193] 'Liberal (the)', *Literary Gazette*, 304 (Nov. 16, 1822), 728. 'Pisan' here referred to Percy Shelley, Hunt and George Byron who were members of what was known in the period as the Pisan-Circle.
[194] Y.Y.Y., 'The Liberal System', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 16:93 (Oct., 1824), 442-455.

international support for reform and independence movements abroad. For instance, in 1822, Jeremy Bentham's proposal for the reform of foreign states was published with the title *Codifications Proposal; To All Nations Professing Liberal Opinions*. Therefore, it is clear that being strictly political, the new meaning of liberal was virtually indifferent to the consideration of status and rank.

Political Economy

As political liberalism problematized the social overtone of the traditional sense of being liberal, the ascendancy of political economy offered an alternative picture of social relations that contested the paternalist practices of deference and benevolence. The history of economic thought usually associates the 1820s with the rise of political economy, particularly the Ricardian version of it.[195] The rise of this science in the period was instrumental in challenging the discourse of deference and benevolence, and the sense of status hierarchy and personal ennoblement that they maintained. One manifestation of this challenge was the increasing use of the social terminology 'class'. According to Steven Wallech, the discourse of political economy was the site of the conceptual strain between the old notion of rank and the new idea of class occurred: political economists 'imparted new meaning to a system of social division that became rooted in the word "class".'[196] This shift from rank to class was not merely terminological, as it also involved a new expectation of social behaviour. Unlike rank which was based on lineage, the notion of class is based on

[195] Ernesto Screpanti and Stefano Zamagni, *An Outline of the History of Economic Thought*, trans. David Field and Lynn Kirby (Oxford, 2005), 91; Some historians even suggest that by this time, the Ricardian School had become synonymous with political economy itself. G. Checkland, 'The Propagation of Ricardian Economics in England', *Economica,* 16:61 (Feb., 1949), 41; Barry Gordon, *Political Economy in Parliament 1819-1823* (London, 1976), 5.

[196] Steven Wallech, 'Class versus Rank: The Transformation of Eighteenth-Century of English Social Terms and Theories of Production', *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 47:3 (Jul. - Sep., 1986), 409.

an identification of interests with those who shared the same socio-economic status. 'Rank' or 'order' did not imply 'structural contest or competition within society …. "Class", on the other hand, contained a potential for change, whether by cooperation, competition, or conflict.'[197]

Some defenders of political economy in the 1820s did see the significance of the science in terms of class interests. The opponents of political economy, they believed, were mainly the powerful classes who simply wanted to enjoy their wealth at the expense of others: 'When particular classes have long been accustomed to profit at the expense of the community, it is no wonder that they are enemies to that science which demonstrates the mischievousness of their most valued privileges.'[198] Because the question of social respect or obedience was out of its discursive radar, the cultural ascendancy of political economy in the decade was seen by some contemporaries as harmful to the preservation of traditional deferential attitudes. One critic complained, for instance, that since political economists claimed that 'profits must be at the highest, when wages are at the lowest', they had wrongly placed 'wages and labourers in fierce and eternal conflict with profits and capitalists.'[199] Furthermore, like the emergence of political liberalism, the ascendancy of political economy 'divided the country on quite different lines' as the 'the old distinctions of Whig and Tory were superseded by questions of commerce and finance.'[200] In fact, there was a strong connection between the spirit of liberalism and the new science. In the 1820s and early 1830s 'liberal', in the new sense of the word, was usually used as a self-designation by those politicians who

[197] Penelope J. Corfield, 'Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in Penelope Corfield (ed.), *Language, History and Class* (Oxford, 1991), 114.
[198] [John Bowring], 'Political Economy', *Westminster Review*, 2:4 (Oct. 1824), 293.
[199] One of the Old School, 'Political Economy: No. I', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* 26:157 (Sep. 1829), 513.
[200] Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals 1830-1852* (Oxford, 1990), 32.

embraced political economy. Hence, when lamenting the radical elements in the Whig camp, Holland for instance, referred to them as Humites, Utilitarians, and Political Economists who styled themselves liberals.[201]

However, what is more important here is how the rise of the new science led to a change in the view of the traditional idea of benevolence. This challenge mostly occurred in the context of the debates over poor relief. Since other forms of official paternalism, such as the regulation of food prices and the fixing of wage rates waned, by the end of the century 'only the Poor Laws remained as a shell of the old governmental paternalism.'[202] One of the main problems with the system was that most resolutions about poor relief were based on the arbitrary decisions of local magistrates and Justice of the Peaces. The problem, one contemporary wrote, could be overcome 'if none but gentlemen of a liberal education were put into the commission of the peace'.[203] However, the years of scarcity that began in 1795, due to a series of poor harvests, and lasted until the end of the Napoleonic war, raised unprecedented challenges for the parish system. The period witnessed a dramatic increase in the numbers of dependent poor, and the gentry of every parish were desperately looking for measures not only to keep the poor alive, but to ensure they remained 'well affected towards their superiors and state'.[204] Legislative remedies, such as the proposal for minimum wage regulation and Pitt's bill on reform of poor laws, were scuppered in Parliament, it was thus left to the Justices and overseers to grapple with the crises.[205] Well into the beginning of the nineteenth century, poor laws continued to serve as the standard relief system, and as the bastion of local

[201] Ibid., 27-28
[202] Peter Dunkley, 'Paternalism, the Magistracy, and the Poor Relief in England, 1795-1834', *International Review of Social History*, 24:3 (December 1979), 375.
[203] Joseph Townsend, *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws* (London, 1786), 12
[204] J.R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795-1834* (London, 1969), 45.
[205] Ibid., 76.

paternalism, maintaining the sense of upper class' benevolence. In fact, as late as the 1820s, the Tory government still thought it expedient to keep the old relief mechanisms in order to maintain the social order. [206]

Some of the foremost political economists in the period were at the forefront of the attack on the existing relief system and charity. Thomas Robert Malthus, for instance, favoured the abolition of the poor law. He maintained that although the poor laws 'may have alleviated a little the intensity of individual misfortune, they have spread the general evil over a much larger surface.'[207] What was normally thought of as a benevolent practice such as giving charity to the poor, he argued, was problematic as it might make the recipient 'fancy himself comparatively rich and able to indulge himself in many hours or days of leisure' and 'would give a strong and immediate check to productive industry.' As this would make the nation poorer and the lower orders 'much more in distress', it was clear that charity should no longer be carried out in an arbitrary manner, rather it should be more discriminating between the deserving and undeserving recipients.[208] In comparison to other areas, London was among the first to experience this transformation of attitudes towards poor relief. This is understandable as the emergence of big cities and their large scale populations 'undermined the assumptions of personal knowledge of character and condition on which older forms of charitable giving had ideally relied.'[209]

Some contemporaries, however, were reluctant to accept this new attitude towards the labouring poor, relief and charity, and regarded it as something contrary to

[206] Peter Dunkley, 'Whigs and Paupers: the Reform of the English Poor Laws, 1830-1834', *Journal of British Studies*, 20:2 (Spring 1981), 126.
[207] Thomas Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as it Affects the Future Improvement of Society* (London, 1798), 74.
[208] Ibid., 78.
[209] M.J.D. Roberts, 'Reshaping the Gift Relationship: the London Mendicity Society and the Suppression of Begging in England 1818-1869', *International Review of Social History*, 36:2 (August 1991), 206.

benevolence. Tory Humanitarians and Romantic critics increasingly characterised political economy as inhumane and cold, 'a dismal science'.[210] Reflecting on David Ricardo's theory of wage-profit inverse relationship, for instance, a critic alleged that 'By making high profits the *sine qua non* of national wealth, and low wages that of high profits, it in reality makes it the grand principle of civil government, to keep the mass of the human race in the lowest stage of indigence and suffering.'[211] However this characterisation is undoubtedly questionable. As Poynter observes, 'Only critics who had misread the *Essay on Population* could accuse Malthus of actually defending misery, and if Ricardo sometimes assumed that wages would tend to subsistence level, he most certainly wished them to be above it.'[212] John Bowring illustrates the mistake of those critics who alleged political economy 'makes men indifferent to the sufferings of mankind' by comparing the ways political economists and their opponents reacted to famine in Ireland: 'Benevolence, without political economy, says, let food be sent. The political economist hesitates, and inquires whether the expense he is called upon to incur would not be incurred in vain.'[213]

It is not our aim here to question the sincerity of Malthus, Ricardo and their followers in their desire to alleviate the suffering of mankind. However, it is still vital to show how the new idea of benevolence that developed out of their discourse of political economy broke with the socio-cultural notions that defined the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal. Political economy did not challenge the idea of benevolence itself, but argued that it ought to be seen in a different light. The

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[210] James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1993), 170

[211] One of the Old School, 'Political Economy', 511.

[212] Poynter, *Society and Pauperism*, xvi; for a discussion on the influence of this mechanistic image of political economy on twentieth-century historiography see Donald Winch, 'Mr Gradgrind and Jerusalem', in Stefan Collini (et.al), *Economy, Polity and Society: British Intellectual History 1750-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), 243-266.

[213] [Bowring], 'Political Economy', 295.

science envisioned a systemic and structural idea of benevolence, rather than a personal one. So when Bowring talked about the cause of evil understood by political economists, by 'cause' he meant a structural or systemic force which was part of the iron laws of socio-economic relations. However, such a view undermined the integral features of the traditional notion of benevolence, crucial to maintaining the sensibility of traditional liberality, namely, the aura of personal ennoblement in the context of social relations. The social picture envisioned by political economy lacked the discursive characters of traditional benevolence including themes like personal sacrifice, selflessness, and generosity. As stressed in the first chapter, the presence of these themes of personal sacrifice and generosity were considered to be essential parts of the gentlemanly persona. After all, gentlemanliness was only intelligible as an attribute of a person, not as an institution or a system. Liberal education itself was characterised as the process of ennobling a personality not an organization. Even if a good system was deemed valuable, it was still regarded as a mere derivative of gentlemanly charisma or leadership. Therefore, because of its impersonal nature, the systemic picture of social relations envisioned by political economy was not compatible with and in fact potentially detrimental to the traditional sentiment of being liberal. Hence it is clear that the cultural ascendancy of political economy in the 1820s further destabilized the pillars on which the cultural integrity of liberal education rested.

It is not difficult to see how these two developments in political and intellectual culture were deeply related to the foundation of the London University. Most contemporaries noted the presence of the new liberal spirit in the cooperation that led to the establishment of the new university. Bentham was said to refer to it as 'the

association of liberals',[214] while a critic of the project called it 'the ultra-liberal policy of a general scientific education.'[215] Together with the Mechanics' Institutes, the university was also sarcastically referred to as a 'Liberal Learned' Institution.[216] Another critic, George D'Oyly, writing under the pseudonym Christianus, described the London University as an institution founded 'on the footing of liberalism.'[217] He argued that the 'spirit of liberalism, in which the university is founded' would lead to the flourishing of freethinking and deism, all of which were injurious to the principles of the established Church.[218] The relationship between political economy and the new institution was no less evident. Several major founders and supporters of the institution such as Zachary Macaulay, James Mill, and George Grote were also founding members of the Political Economy Club in 1821.[219] Henry Brougham and others were closely associated with the *Edinburgh Review*, perhaps the first publication to assert the importance of political economy for policy making.[220] Furthermore, Mill and the first professor of political economy at the university, John R. McCulloch, were the two most important figures in popularising Ricardian political economy after the death of Ricardo in 1823.

It is therefore unsurprising that, as early as 1825, when the plan for the university was made public, some critics began to associate the projected institution with the ideology of political economy. William Cobbett remarked sarcastically that 'we now hear nothing of the "London University', of which PETER MACCULOCH was to

[214] Negley Harte, *The University of London: an Illustrated History, 1836-1986* (London, 1986), 78.
[215] 'Grinfield's Reply to Mr. Brougham on Education', *Christian Remembrancer*, August 1825, 489.
[216] 'Liberal Learned Institutions', *The Age*, Sunday, February 28, 1830, 67.
[217] Christianus, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Robert Peel, on the Subject of the London University* (London, 1828), 23.
[218] Ibid., 22-23.
[219] *Political Economy Club, founded in London, 1821. Minutes of Proceedings, 1821-1882* (London, 1882), 289-290.
[220] For a discussion on the relationship between *Edinburgh Review* and political economy see Biancamara Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: the Edinburgh Review* (Cambridge, 1985).

be "*Professor of Political Philosophy*," and in which us foolish Englishmen were to be taught how to "create capital by the use of a cheap currency".'[221] However, the connection between the London University and the new spirit of political economy ran deeper than this. If the social life of Oxford and Cambridge was a microcosm of the wider paternalistic society where status hierarchy was cherished and maintained, the organisational structure and culture of the London University was parallel to the managerial and systemic model of social relationships anticipated by the new science of political economy.

Reading Political Economy into the Institutional Life of the London University

Before examining the organisational culture of the university it is important to identify the four main components of the institution that constituted the core of its social nexus. There were the Council, the warden, professors and students. The Council was the highest governing body of the university consisting of 24 persons selected from among the shareholders or proprietors. The membership included Mill, Brougham, James Mackintosh, George Grote etc. Another key part of the administration of the university was the warden. Officially, the warden represented the Council, and served as the mediator between them and the other two key parties, the professors and students. Leonard Horner was appointed to this central position in May 1827. The academic body was mainly represented by professors, teaching staff (whose salaries were based on students' fees), and the students themselves. There were also some members of the university that did not fall into either of these categories, like beadles (officials that enforced discipline), and demonstrators in the

[221] William Cobbett, 'To Mr. Brougham', *Wm Cobbett's Weekly Register* (Dec. 24, 1825), 324.

laboratories. As interest groups, however, they were not as significant or as self-conscious as in the four main components.

After the Council was formed in December 1825 and the process of filling the academic and administrative posts began, there were some attempts by the newly appointed members to define their status and position in the institution by proposing the use of titles and practices that resembled those of the ancient universities, for example, Horner's proposal to change the title of his position from 'clerk' or 'secretary' to 'warden'. In one of the first legal documents of the university, the Deed of Settlement (1826), it was stated that the Council should appoint 'a Secretary, or Clerk and Clerks, for conducting the business of the Institution'.[222] Later in the meeting of the Council of 12 May 1827, it was decided that Horner 'be appointed as Secretary.'[223] Horner accepted the offer; but just two days later he wrote to a member of the Council, asking for assurance about the nature of that post.

Horner's anxiety over the status of his position, especially in relation to that of the professors, was obvious:

> It is proper, however, for me to state, that while I do not object to the name of Secretary, if the Council think that is the most appropriate term, my understanding of the nature of the office is this – that as the organ of the Council, I am to possess that authority over the professors, and the various officers of the establishment, which is usually vested in the Principal or acting Head of other Academical institutions – that I am not to hold a subordinate situation, or to be under the control or direction of any other power than the Council.[224]

The fact that he described his power as that which is 'usually vested in the Principal or acting Head of other Academical institutions' provides a clue as to why he considered the term 'secretary' questionable. It was very likely that Horner saw his

[222] *The Deed of Settlement of the University of London* (London, 1826), 18.
[223] University College London, Council Minutes, 'Session of Council, 12th May 1827', 76.
[224] Katharine M. Lyell (ed.), *Memoir of Leonard Horner, Consisting of Letters to His Family and Frome Some of His Friends*. 2 vols. (London, 1890), i. 233-234.

position as being equivalent to the heads of colleges of the ancient universities; at some Oxford colleges, for example, like *All Souls* and *Merton*, the heads were titled 'warden'. Oxford wardens had ceremonial and administrative significance, and in fact there were cases where the warden became at the same time the vice-chancellor of the university.[225] In a meeting of the Council on 12 July 1827, 'it was resolved that the office to which Mr Horner has been appointed be designated by the name of Warden.'[226] By rebranding the position, Horner tried to imbue his office with an aura that was previously inconceivable in the original outline of the university. Was he successful? The immediate answer is no. This terminological shift was motivated by Horner's preoccupation with protecting his interests against those of the professors. What he seemed to underestimate was the fact that the prestige acquired by the wardens at Oxbridge was due to their place in the wider paternalist and deferential collegiate life, where members generally understood their interests in a communal rather than individual sense. In other words, simply abstracting one aspect of it – in this case the title 'warden' – and lodging it in a virtually different institutional life would not make it work. As we will see shortly, it turned out that Horner, despite the title, was seen more as the manager of a company than, say, the head of a prestigious college.

Another case that is worthy of note is the proposal to the Council by some professors regarding the practice of wearing gowns. In the eighteenth-century, this practice was common at the ancient universities; but what is relevant here is its centrality in maintaining the deferential atmosphere of the collegiate life. Graham Midgley, for instance, suggests that the different types of gowns worn at Oxford

[225] For example, Scrope Bredmore, the warden of Merton College between 1790 and 1810, and Vice Chancellor of Oxford from 1796 to 1797. G.H. Martin and J.R.L Highfield, *A History of Merton College, Oxford* (Oxford, 1997), 237.
[226] University College London, Council Minutes, 'Session of Council, 12th July 1827', 96.

reflected the sense of status hierarchy that divided students into four groups: noblemen, gentlemen-commoner, commoners and servitors. He further argues that the gowns and 'the distinctions they marked were valued and considered of serious importance as part of the framework holding together the academic society in a safe and disciplined structure' and the '[v]iolations of their use, far from being sartorial peccadilloes, were blows against the right and God-given hierarchy.'[227] This clarifies how in English educational milieu the act of wearing gowns was fundamentally related to the issue of preserving order and hierarchy.

In July 1828 a group of professors, led by Dionysius Lardner, proposed to the Council of the London University the idea of having their own gowns. From a letter of Horner to Lardner, it is clear that the Council left the matter entirely in the hands of the professors. Instead of signifying openness, this stand taken by the Council should be read as an indication of their indifference to the cultural and symbolic enrichment of the institution. In a personal letter, Horner wrote that, as the issue was left with the professors, 'I do not think that it would be right to trouble them on the subject again…' He then tried to console Lardner by observing that, 'however trifling it may be in comparison with other objects of their attention it is not so unimportant as some view it.'[228] Here, Horner seemed to admit that the Council left the matter to the professors mainly because they found it trivial, and thus unworthy of their attention.

The letter tells us something about how Horner, and probably the professors too, perceived the significance of wearing gowns. It was agreed that such practice would greatly contribute to the sense of orderliness at the institution. Horner, for instance,

[227] Graham Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford* (London, 1996), 14.
[228] Wellcome Library, MS. 5490/10, Leonard Horner to [Dionysius Lardner], July 25, 1828.

expressed his conviction 'that in a place where young men are congregated together, an attention to external forms comes powerfully in aid in preserving order.' He also thought that wearing gowns was commendable due to the association of such practice with public officers: 'we have to attend to the habits and prejudices of the great mass of the public of London, who see from the Parish Beadle to the King, all persons holding office arranged in a particular dress when they are called upon to discharge their several functions.' He worried that an indifference to external observances would serve 'as an evidence of a vulgar republican spirit, of that hard unrefined tone so generally characteristic of the lower class of Dissenters in England, rather than as any proof of a high philosophic dignity despising all empty trappings.'[229]

Undoubtedly, the proposal was made due to the fact that many of the professors, including Lardner, were former students or fellows from either Oxford or Cambridge. However, just as with the earlier case of the title 'warden', it was an attempt to transplant an aspect of the collegiate life, while ignoring the wider context that enabled it to acquire its significance. Both examples, the warden title and acquisition of gowns, suggested that the individual members of the university were concerned about the need to protect their interests, but through the utilisation of already established cultural resources, mainly derived from the ancient universities. This derivation was inevitable as the official definition and description of positions given in the constitution of the London University was extremely legalistic and dry, and thus left an existential lacuna to be filled using the available cultural resources. The futility of these piecemeal efforts, however, was due to the dominant structure and ethos of the London University, which was unfavourable to

[229] Ibid.

the working of such customary practices. Virtually devoid of the deferential language and practice, the connection between components was almost solely maintained by what we can call the mechanistic legalism of the Council.

The outlook of the Council towards the members of the institution was frequently expressed in terms of the metaphor of a machine, thus it was an impersonal relationship. This outlook became explicit between 1829 and 1833 when the London University was embroiled in a triangular civil war between the warden and certain professors; between professors and students; and between professors and the Council. This conflict, which virtually paralysed the institution, was due to several issues relating to the status of professors. They included the dissatisfaction of some professors with their salary, the meddling of the warden in academic affairs, and the allegedly disrespectful behaviour of some students.[230] However, our concern here is not this conflict per se, but how the Council's response to it reflected their view of the institution as a machine. Lord Auckland, one of the Council members, for instance, really perceived the duty of a Council member in this situation as analogous to the task of an engineer in relation to the working of an engine. While looking for a solution to the problem facing the university Auckland was highly impressed by the systematic planning of the newly founded institution in Paris, *Ecole central des Arts et manufactures*. Central to the organisation of the Parisian institution was the warden. The underlying idea discerned by Auckland here was that, an efficient warden was vital to the smooth running of the machine. For him '[t]he machine must be made to work of itself & the principal engineers may

[230] Negley Harte and John North, *The World of UCL 1828-1990* (London, 1991), 42-43; H. Hale Bellot, *University College London 1826-1926* (London, 1929), 191.

occasionally visit & regulate it.'[231] The ideal warden in this respect was an efficient manager, not the paternal and symbolically rich head of the colleges of the ancient institutions. Apart from Auckland, Mill was another Council member who utilized the machine metaphor in describing the running of the university. For example, in his letter to Macvey Napier dated 8th of July 1830, he lamented that 'for the state of hostile feeling among them [professors and the warden] it is vain to expect that the machine will work well.'[232]

This institutional outlook exemplified a detached mode of viewing and judging. Seen in this light, the relationship between the Council and other members of the institution was normally conducted in an impersonal way. One example of this was in the strict legalistic approach adopted by the governing body in their dealings with the professors, an approach that was deeply resented by the majority of the teaching staff. For instance, in May 1829, Lardner sent a memorandum to the Council regarding the issue of his salary. Upon receiving this, the Council then asked him to attend their meeting. The professor then wrote to the governing body that he was ready to attend the meeting 'personally on the understanding that the matter at issue is to be considered upon general principles of honour and justice and that I am not to be called upon to answer technical legal objections.' Here, one may note the difference that Lardner discerned between legal and honourable principles. Despite stating these terms, he still had 'no doubt that this is the way in which the Council intend to entertain the question but I think that in justice to myself I ought thus specifically to mention the condition on which I go before them.'[233] For many

[231] University College London, Brougham Papers, HB/34248, Lord Auckland to Henry Brougham, March 26, 1829.
[232] Cited in Alexander Bain, *James Mill, a Biography* (London, 1882), 353.
[233] University College London, College Correspondence, UCC/P223, Dionysius Lardner to the Chairman of the Council, 22 May 1829.

professors, the Council treated them as mere employees, with little respect for their personal scholarly standing. As Antonio Panizzi – the professor of Italian – wrote to Auckland, the Council saw 'no distinction between a man of an European reputation like Mr [Charles] Bell, for instance, and any beadle or porter of the University.'[234]

It is therefore clear how the paradigm that governed the institutional organisation of the London University embodied the managerial and systemic model of social relationships envisioned by political economy. As this institutional mentality emphasised the efficient working of a system at the expense of personal ennoblement, it was therefore incompatible with the traditional sense of being liberal. If the organisational viability of the university was based on the recognition and management of the competing interests of its members, its social relevance was grounded in the acknowledgement of the conflicting interests among social classes. In the next chapter we shall discuss in detail how the well-known claim of the founders that the university was intended for the middle classes signified yet another important break from the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education.

[234] Brougham Papers, HB/34247. Antonio Panizzi to Auckland, 24 March 1829, enclosed in Auckland to Henry Brougham, 25th March 1829.

Chapter Three

The London University and 'the March of Intellect'

In a letter sent to Henry Brougham in January 1825 – published in *The Times* on 9 February – Thomas Campbell made clear that the University of London was meant for 'the youth of our middling rich people between the age of 15 or 16 and 20, or later if you please.'[235] Later, when trying to gain support for a bill in Parliament on May 26, Brougham told the House of Commons that he should 'be surprised if any opposition were made to a bill, of which the sole object was to render education come-at-able by the middling classes of society.'[236] Therefore, from the very early stage of its foundation there was a clear indication that the core founders intended the University of London to serve the interests of the middle classes, for whom Oxford and Cambridge were financially out of reach. This was not really 'arising from the University fees or the payments for instruction … but from habits of expensive living among the under-graduates.'[237] During this period, the demand for middle-class university education was part of a broader development in the educational reform movement. Figures associated with the foundation of the university, such as Brougham, James Mill and George Birkbeck, were also involved in the establishment of two more institutions in England, the Mechanics' Institutes (1823) and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (1827), both of which were meant for the labouring classes.[238]

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[235] Thomas Campbell, 'Proposal of a Metropolitan University, in a Letter to Henry Brougham, ESQ.', *The Times*, Feb. 9, 1825.
[236]House of Commons Debate (hereafter HC Deb) 26 May 1825, vol. 13, col 841.
[237] *Statement by the Council of the University of London, Explanatory of its Nature and Objects* (London, 1827), 7.
[238] Negley Harte and John North, *The World of UCL 1828-2004* (London, 2004), 59; G.F.A. Baer, 'Henry Lord Brougham: Champion of Popular Education', *History of Education*, 6:1 (Autumn 1954), 160; Ian Cumming, 'Enemies to Wonder: James Mill and the Diffusionist', *Paedagogica Historica*,

Particularly after the establishment of the Mechanics' Institutes, many reformers started to feel that there should be a specific educational programme for the middle classes. The middling rich had to be educated, Campbell urged, if they were to catch up with their labourers whose education had been secured by those institutes that flourished throughout the country: '[w]hen the poor are becoming instructed it is time that their employers also should rise in the scale of instruction.'[239] Brougham also reportedly said that the foundation 'wished to give the middling classes an opportunity of getting that education at a cheaper rate for their children, which their servants, their shoemakers, their farriers, and their blacksmiths were now getting almost for nothing at the different institutions which had recently been erected for their benefit and instruction.'[240] London was seen as the most suitable place for this enterprise since in the metropolis the middle classes 'form a momentously important mass of society.'[241] In the words of James Mill, '[t]here is an aggregate of persons of the middle rank collected in one spot in London, the like to which exists in no other spot in the surface of the earth.'[242]

Historians of education and social historians have long recognised the status of the London University as a middle-class institution.[243] Some view its significance in terms of the alleged rise of middle-class education in the period. The 1820s is seen as the decade when middle-class educational institutions started to enjoy 'a

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11:2 (1971), 366; Harold Smith, *The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge 1826 -1846: a Social and Bibliographical Evaluation* (London, 1974), 5.

[239] Campbell, 'Proposal'.
[240] HC Deb 26 May 1825, vol. 13, col 841.
[241] Campbell, 'Proposal'.
[242] James Mill, 'States of the Nation', *Westminster Review*, 6 (1826: Oct), 270.
[243]S.J. Curtis, *History of Education in Great Britain* (London, 1950), 408; Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change and Society in England 1780-1870* (London, 1983), 47; W.B. Stephens, *Education in Britain, 1750-1914* (London, 1998), 54; Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education 1780-1870* (London, 1960), 119; Harold Silver, *English Education and the Radicals 1780-1850* (London, 1975), 40.

remarkable expansion.'[244] In the words of Brian Simon, the founding of the University of London reflected a moment when the '*bourgeois* (or middle-class) thrust in education began to express itself forcibly.'[245] However, the importance of the middle-class aspect of the university has never been scrutinised beyond the apparent conclusion that it was purported to cater to the needs of a social group that was largely excluded from the ancient universities. In other words, the theme of middle-class education has been viewed solely from a socio-economic perspective.

This chapter will show how the promotion of a middle-class university education, through the foundation of the London University, was also significant because it represented an aspect of the cultural challenge to traditional liberal education. For us to understand this challenge, we need to see it as an issue of cultural struggle rather than purely a socio-economic issue. Basically, this involves a readiness to appreciate the wider contextual significance underlying the contemporary usage of the category 'middle classes'. As Dror Wahrman reminds us, terms like 'middle class', 'private' and 'public' 'are not simply heuristic concepts which we can import into our analysis but, rather, categories which invoked changing ranges of meanings and which carried different stakes at different moments and within different contexts.'[246] Although we learned earlier that Joseph Priestley had used the term 'middle-classes' in his educational analysis since the 1770s, it was only in the 1820s that the category started to become a culturally contested and politically charged idiom. R.S. Neale, for instance, suggests that the 1820s witnessed the emergence of some sections of

[244] F. Musgrove, 'Middle-Class Education and Employment in the Nineteenth Century', *The Economic History Review*, 12:1 (1959), 102;
[245] Brian Simon, 'Systematisation and Segmentation in Education: the Case of England', in Fritz Ringer (et. al), *The Rise of the Modern Educational System: Structural Change and Social Reproduction 1870-1920* (Cambridge, 1987), 95.
[246] Dror, Wahrman, 'Middle-class Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria', *Journal of British Studies*, 32:4 (Oct., 1993), 398.

the social group as a political class, often in 'opposition to aristocratic privilege'.[247] In his *Imagining the Middle Class,* Wahrman argues that, given the political upheaval and the broader mood for parliamentary reform during the decade, talk of middle classes or what he calls the 'middle-class idiom' was pivotal in, first, creating an image of a safe and stable reform alternative which would not succumb to popular pressure; and second, in giving a strong sense of the presence of a social group that would lead to the formation of a new electoral map.[248] Hence, given these views, it is worth considering whether in promoting middle-class university education, the founders of the London University were also making a cultural and political statement.

This chapter therefore will explore the cultural conflict between the notions of middle-class university education and traditional liberal education in the debates surrounding the establishment of the London University. It is argued that, as it framed the problem of educational need in terms of the upper, middle and lower classes, the idea of university education for the middle classes shifted the mode of thinking about university education from one grounded in gentleman/vulgar or liberal/illiberal status distinction to one based on socio-economic identification. The real significance of this switch is discernible if we understand that by using the term 'the middle classes' the founders mainly referred to tradesmen, a social group that was long deemed unsuitable for university education due to their status as non-gentlemen. By identifying them as the middle classes, the founders emphasised the identity of tradesmen in terms of their financial and economic conditions, thus rendering the question of their status as non-gentlemen irrelevant. Finally, the

[247]RS Neale, 'Class and Class-Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century England: Three or Five', *Victorian Studies,* 12:1 (Sep., 1968), 14-15.
[248] Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: the Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), 226-227.

cultural character of this struggle is further confirmed, albeit negatively, by the propensity of the critics to portray the university as a vulgar or cockney institution rather than a middle-class one, which was a reflection of their rigid adherence to the old binary worldview.

Before proceeding to the analysis, it is worth making it clear that in this chapter terms like 'middle classes', 'middling ranks' and other variants of the social *middle* are treated as interchangeable. Although in the previous chapter we discussed how historians like Steven Wallech and Penelope Corfield regard the terminological change from 'rank' to 'class' as a manifestation of the shift from the old paternalist outlook of society to the one grounded in socio-economic relationships, that is acceptable as long as we take it as a reference to patterns at the macro-social level. It is not applicable to an inquiry that requires analysis at the level of concrete individual usage. Even Asa Briggs, despite his sensitivity to the difference between 'rank' and 'class', is aware that throughout the late eighteenth century the 'old and new terms of theories existed side by side.'[249] Therefore we concur with Wahrman who appears to be right in observing that with respect to the middle classes, '[w]hat constituted the bone of contention was the existence, and the relevance and the consequences of a social *middle* rather than the distinctions between 'class' or 'rank', or 'order' (in singular or in plural form).'[250] We shall begin our discussion by focusing on the promotion of middle-class university education within the context of the broader reform movement that demanded the extension of education to those who were previously marginalised by existing educational arrangements. The aim of this discussion is to show how the idea of extending education to all

[249] Asa Briggs, 'Middle-Class Consciousness in English Politics, 1780-1846', *Past & Present*, 9 (Apr., 1956), 67.
[250] Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*, 15.

social classes broke from the old assumption that took status as constitutive of the very meaning of education. In this way it was thus incompatible with the discourse of liberal education.

Educational Reform and Liberal Education in the 1820s

Most historians recognise that the main aim of the educational reform movement led by Brougham was to extend education to the middle and lower classes, and they usually understand this goal in an institutional and social sense. However, what can be easily overlooked is the fact that the claim that education was extendable itself exemplified a totally different assumption about what education was. From the very beginning, the demand for the extension of education in the 1820s was not only a social and institutional issue, but also a cultural struggle against the old meaning and practice of education. In this respect even 'extending education' was a partial and culturally specific idiom, since liberal education was not just a type of education where other possible types could be considered; rather it was an integral part of the very meaning of education itself and the embodiment of its finest qualities. Some educational reformists in the early nineteenth century, while talking of extending education, realised that they were departing from this old meaning of education which they considered restrictive. For instance, in his well-known essay 'On Education' Mill noted that 'the term Education has been commonly confined; or rather, the word Education has been used in a sense so unhappily restricted …. It has not extended to all the arts, but only to those which have been denominated

liberal.'[251] He was perfectly aware of how even his enlightened predecessors like Milton and Locke 'had in view no education, but that of the *gentleman*. It had not presented itself, even to their minds that education was a blessing in which the indigent orders could be made to partake.'[252] Mill therefore demanded the extension of education. However, what we should not overlook is how the notion of social class was central to the language of this demand.

As Mill saw it, the main question that should concern us is '[w]hat is the sort of education required for the different classes of society, and what should be the difference in the training provided for each?'[253] To ask this question was to assume that the meaning and practice of education was contingent upon the socio-economic functions of the respective classes. Based on this assumption it is therefore unsurprising that Mill considered apprenticeship as a type of education: 'The apprenticeships … which youths are accustomed to serve to the useful arts, we regard as a branch of their education.'[254] The promotion of middle-class university education as manifested by the establishment of the London University was built upon this relatively novel cultural assumption about the meaning of education. It is therefore unsurprising that one of the Edward Copleston's principal objections to the foundation of the London University was that it was based on a different conception of education than the traditional understanding. He accused Campbell of 'resolving EDUCATION into the mere acquisition of knowledge', one that was 'unconnected with religious instruction, and with the formation of manners and character.'[255] Given this wider context of cultural contestation over the meaning of education, in

[251] James Mill, 'Education', in Terence Ball (ed.) *James Mill: Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1992), 182.
[252] Ibid., 184-185.
[253] Ibid., 182.
[254] Ibid., 187.
[255] [Edward Copleston], 'The London University', *Quarterly Review*, 33:65 (Dec., 1825), 260.

the next part we shall examine how the idea of a middle-class university education constituted a significant aspect of the challenge to liberal education.

The Demand for Middle-Class University Education and the Challenge to Traditional Liberal Education

First let us clarify the relationship between the 'middle classes' as a socio-economic category and the status distinction between gentleman and vulgar. If the upper classes were easily translatable into gentlemen and the lower orders into vulgar, the middle classes were somewhat between these two categories. This is because, as it was a broad group of people, some of its members, if evaluated in status terms, were gentlemen; while others were not. According to the traditional view, members of the middle classes who fell on the vulgar side were therefore in this respect marginalised and hardly distinguishable from the lower orders. Whether one was to be primarily identified as a gentleman or middle class all depended on the convention of identification in the respective intellectual and cultural domains. For instance, in political economy where tripartite socio-economic classification dominated the discursive landscape, 'middle classes' could easily stand as one of the primary categories, while 'gentleman' was completely absent.[256] On the other hand, in some literary discourse, the 'middle classes' had no effective presence at all. For example, William Stafford notes that although those who participated in the production of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the late eighteenth century may have been identified socio-economically as middle class, they still generally thought and

[256] In the 1820s, this mode of representation was exemplified in the political economy of David Ricardo. He talked, for instance, of the relation between three social groups: landlords, capitalists and labourers in terms of their relation to production rather than their status. David Ricardo, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation,* 3rd edition (London, 1821), v.

spoke of themselves as gentlemen.[257] Governed by the ethos of liberal education, the discourse about university education was one of the traditional domains where status categories were the most entrenched. Hence, when the founders of the London University emphasised that the institution was meant for the middle classes, they were at the same time challenging one of the core assumptions that underpinned traditional liberal education at that time.

To grasp the nature of this challenge, first, we need to identify who the founders were referring to when they spoke about the middle classes, and then identify their place in relation to liberal education in order to appreciate what was really at stake in the description of them as a socio-economic group. Until now, it is unclear who the founders referred to as the middle classes, since historians usually leave that social category unexplained. However, from a close reading of the early writings of the founders it is possible to see who they generally had in mind. In a letter to Brougham, after insisting that the university was meant for the middling rich, Campbell further clarified that 'By the middling rich I mean all between mechanics and the enormously rich.'[258] Most historians that study the establishment of the London University are aware of this statement, but none seem to pay attention to Campbell's crucial distinction between the two groups that constituted his 'middling rich' and who differed in terms of their relationship with education: 'A portion of this mass consists, indeed of professional men, who must always be highly

[257] 'The magazine's editors and writers mostly did not have a three-tiered society in mind, with upper, middle, and lower classes, but instead, two tiers, with an elevated plateau at the top, separated by a steep cliff from a plain below. On that plateau stood traditional elites, plus, it might be said, the upper portion of a middle class that had not yet imagined itself. The latter was convinced that it was different from those on the plain below, and chose to identify itself with those on the gentlemanly plateau.' William Stafford, 'Representations of the Social Order in the Gentleman's Magazine 1785-1815', *Eighteenth- Century Life*, 33:2 (Spring 2009), 79.
[258]Campbell, 'Proposal'.

educated: but it is desirable that all portions of it should be well-educated.'[259] It is evident here that the first group were the members of the liberal professions (barristers, physicians and clergymen). Since this group were generally educated, his main concern was with the other group of the middling rich who were generally beyond the purview of education.

Although Campbell did not explicitly mention who they were, it is clear from the overall message of the letter that he was referring to tradesmen. He maintained that the metropolis contained 'the greatest assemblage in the world of those small comfortable trading fortunes which place their owners in a station where intellectual accomplishments can be too easily dispensed with. There is such a thing as a wealthy ignorance in London, which cares not for being laughed at.'[260] Reference to tradesmen was more explicit in Brougham's speeches in the House of Commons. For instance, on one occasion he told his audience that the development of the university was important for the middle classes as it was unlikely that 'respectable tradesmen would be satisfied to see their sons more ignorant than the sons of their carpenters and their bell-hangers.'[261] Just after his letter to Brougham, Campbell published an essay that contained a more systematic elucidation of his proposal, and which as well as sticking to the earlier social characterisation of the institution, continued to identify tradesmen as the main target of the project. For example, he stressed that as 'the poorer class, who must go to labour early in life could not be included in the benefits of this plan,' the advantages of the new institution would instead 'extend down to the son of the less opulent master tradesman.'[262] At another

[259]Ibid.
[260] Ibid.
[261] HC Deb Friday June 3, 1825, vol.13, col 1035.
[262] Thomas Campbell, 'Suggestions Respecting the Plan of an University in London', *New Monthly Magazine*, 13:49 (Jan. 1825), 406.

point where he lamented the exclusiveness of the educational establishment, Campbell asked, 'Is the education of a merchant and tradesman, then of no account?'[263]

Clearly, then, the category 'middle classes' had a relatively stable meaning among the core founders. However, a further question arises. Who were the tradesmen as described by Campbell and Brougham? In that time the meaning of the word 'tradesman' was subject to regional variations. A group of authors in London maintained that a 'tradesman' 'is understood by various people, and in various places, in a very different manner.' In Northern Britain and Ireland, the word referred to 'a mechanic such as *smith*, a *carpenter*, a *bricklayer*, and the like' while in London and Southern Britain it generally meant 'all sorts of warehouse-keepers and shop keepers' which included among others 'grocers, mercers, linen-drapers, woollen-drapers, tobacconists, haberdashers, glovers, hosiers, milliners, booksellers, corn-chandlers, druggists, stationers, and all other shop-keepers.'[264] The authors regarded the southern usage as standard while the northern variant was dismissed as vulgar and misleading.[265] The underlying criterion that distinguished the two usages, as we can see, was the distinction between making and selling. Some literature about tradesmen in the 1820s, whether polemical or prescriptive, did use the southern version of the term, treating them as synonymous with shopkeepers.[266] Since Campbell excluded mechanics from the category of the 'middle classes', it is therefore clear that his use of 'tradesmen' was terminologically closer to the

[263] Ibid., 414.
[264] Several Tradesmen, *The London Tradesman; a Familiar Treatise on the National Trade and Commerce* (London, 1819), vii.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Common Sense, 'Golden Rules to Render Young Tradesmen Respectable, Prosperous and Wealthy', *Monthly Magazine* (July, 1822), 516-517; HT, 'London Tradesmen', *Cobbett's Weekly Register* (Nov. 21, 1829), 665-666; David Booth, *The Tradesmen, Merchants, and Accountant Assistants* (London, 1821).

southern version. In his 'Suggestions', Campbell reported how one of his acquaintances asked him if he 'would invite a shopkeeper to study Greek and Hebrew?' which, if it was true, showed that his audience also decoded his 'tradesmen' in the same sense. Historians are agreed that in terms of wealth and numbers, shopkeepers were the most prominent socio-economic group among the London middle-classes in the late eighteenth century.[267] This identification leads us to deeper questions of what it meant to offer a university education to tradesmen in the period.

Traditionally, tradesmen and their families were often reminded of the irrelevance of education to their place in society: 'If the youth is to be brought up to trade, he should be taught such things only as shall be serviceable to him in that line of life. Polite literature or a liberal education is thrown away upon such an one; rather it is an injury to him.'[268] Tradesmen who attempted to educate their daughters, for instance, outside the areas of their supposed future roles as servants and housewives, were ridiculed as preparing 'the most useless of all God's creatures.'[269] Another commentator noted a widely held assumption that 'successful tradesmen are not bred in grammar-schools' since it was thought that 'a classical education is unfriendly to commercial habits'. Liberal education, which aimed at broadening the mind, was deemed unfit for them since they were expected to direct their thoughts to the narrow pursuit of trades: 'the public anticipate the greatest commercial success from those individuals whose minds, being capable of grasping only one subject,

[267]They comprised 'as many as 37 per cent of those paying taxes' in London. L.D. Schwarz, 'Social Class and Social Geography: the Middle Classes in London at the end of the Eighteenth Century', *Social History*, 7:2 (May, 1982), 177.
[268] 'On the Choice of Proper Trades', *Literary Magazine*, 11 (Dec 1793), 432.
[269] Spectator, 'On the Education of Tradesmen's Daughters', *Tradesmen*, 7: 49 (Oct, 1811), 272; A Repentant Father, 'On the Folly of What is Generally Called a Genteel Education', *Lady's Monthly Museum*, 9 (Nov 1802), 339.

never deviate from it.'[270] In general, the tradesman's lack of a liberal education became part of the common sense that permeated not only educational, but many other institutional practices in the period. For instance, part of the defence of a tradesman in a trial at the Old Bailey was that, 'it is at all times a hard task for a plain-dealing tradesman, who has not enjoyed a liberal education and is not accustomed to public speaking, to address a numerous assembly, and so to frame his address, as to carry conviction home to the minds of his hearers.'[271]

The main anxiety among tradesmen with regard to education was that, unlike apprenticeship, it was something completely outside the sphere of their occupation and was thus of no use to them. From his earlier statement, it is clear that Campbell had already anticipated this problem and tried to deal with it. He attempted to convince this section of the middle classes that education would not interfere with their future work and assured them that 'a man may rise to fortune even amidst intellectual pursuits.' He wished to know, indeed, 'how many have been made bankrupts by habits which reading and study tend to avert!'[272] In his 'Suggestions' Campbell related how one of his acquaintances claimed that 'the citizens of London care little about education, and will keep their money in their pockets'; to which he replied, 'I cannot believe that any man who loves his son … will grudge £100 or a year or two from his apprenticeship, to place him in the rank of cultivated minds.'[273] Clearly this anxiety haunted the founders and members of the institution for several years. In 1830, two years after the official opening of the university, some professors became greatly concerned about the attitude of the inhabitants of London

[270] T. Jarold, 'On Education', *Monthly Magazine*, 47:332 (Feb 1819), 11.
[271] Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 7.0, 10 June 2014), December 1835, trial of ROBERT BALLS THOMAS HARRIS MARCUS WARSCHAUER, alias Marcus warsower, alias Mordecai Moses, (t18351214-289).
[272] Campbell, 'Proposal'.
[273] Campbell, 'Suggestions', 408.

towards university education. This was a cause of great concern to the teaching body because their salary was to be primarily drawn from the students' fees.

In a letter to the shareholders of the university, John Conolly, Augustus De Morgan, Dionysius Lardner, George Long and John R. McCulloch talked about the reality that they were facing. The inhabitants of London, they stressed, were 'strangers to the advantages of a university education; and it cannot be supposed that they should be very anxious to procure for their sons that extensive and varied instructions which were not afforded to themselves.'[274] They further maintained that since most of their students came from middle-class backgrounds, 'if we wish to succeed, we ought to accommodate our lectures to their convenience'.[275] They also suggested that some courses that took eight months should be shortened as many young men could not afford to attend for so long.[276] This difficulty is particularly understandable if one realises that in comparison to their provincial counterparts, London shopkeepers were notorious for their immersion in business. At around the same time as the foundation, for instance, the practice of the metropolitan shopkeepers of waiting to open their shops until late in the morning had invited criticism from those concerned about the injurious effects of such habits upon the welfare of apprentices and shopmen.[277] Hence Campbell was offering the London University to a section of the middle classes who were both unfamiliar with university education and too immersed in their work to attend.

One possible objection to our claim about the unfamiliarity of tradesmen with university education is the fact that this social group had achieved admittance to the

[274] *A Letter to the Shareholders and Council of the University of London* (London, 1830), 2-3.
[275] Ibid., 8.
[276] Ibid., 9.
[277] 'Early Shop-Shutting', *Examiner* (Aug. 21, 1825), 531; 'Closing up Shops', *Kaleidoscope* (Aug. 30, 1825), 68-69.

ancient universities since at least the seventeenth century. It is true that some studies mention the admission of a considerable number of tradesmen to the ancient universities from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries.[278] It is, however, wrong to assume that there was a linear progression from this period through to the late eighteenth century. English universities underwent considerable changes throughout the eighteenth century, including a significant increase in students' cost of living. Hence, from the 1750s the ancient institutions started to be increasingly restricted to the sons of landlords and liberal professionals.[279] According to Rosemary O'Day, between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a marked decline in the number of students 'who recorded their status as "plebeian".' She shows that in the case of Oxford, this decline was very dramatic. For instance, between 1637 and 1639 they made up 37 percent of the student population, but then decreased to 17 percent in 1760 and by 1810 dropped to just one percent.[280] It is therefore clear that by the time of the foundation of the London University the aristocratic picture of Oxbridge was already entrenched in the contemporary imagination.[281]

However, it was not just their lack of enthusiasm for learning that defined the negative relationship between tradesmen and education. From the standpoint of liberal education, they were already deemed unsuitable for university education due to their status as non-gentleman. Many writings from the period portrayed the

[278] Joan Simmon, 'The Social Origins of Cambridge Students, 1603-1640', *Past & Present,* 26 (Nov. 1963), 61; David Cressy, 'The Social Composition of Caius College Cambridge 1580-1640', *Past & Present,* 47 (May 1970), 114-115.
[279] Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640 – 1900', *Past & Present,* 42 (Feb. 1969), 136.
[280] Rosemary O' Day, *Education and Society 1500 – 1800: the Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain*, (London, 1982), 197.
[281] R.D. Anderson, *Universities and Elites in Britain since 1800* (Cambridge, 1995), 5.

unequal status of relations between tradesmen and gentlemen.[282] This suggests that in regards to liberal education, the illiberal and vulgar tradesmen were indistinguishable from the inferior mechanics and artisans. However, there is something about the vagueness of the term 'tradesmen' itself that allowed a sense of common status between those who were involved in selling or retail, like shopkeepers, and skilled artisans. Although it has been shown that some regarded the Northern usage of the term as vulgar; this view was not universally accepted. Several eighteenth-century dictionaries did give two definitions of 'tradesman'. One referred to a person 'who buys or sells by retail' or 'a shopkeeper' and the other to 'a mechanic' and 'one skilled in trade'.[283] Some literature even conflated both groups under 'tradesman'. For instance, *The Book of English Trades,* which had been published in at least seven editions by 1818, lumped together under 'tradesmen' mechanics including carpenters and smiths with shopkeepers like druggists and booksellers.[284] Originally published as *The Book of Trades* in 1804, the work received positive reviews without any notice being taken about its use of the term 'tradesmen', which suggests that the broader usage was at times acceptable.[285] Perhaps what made this conflation unremarkable for some contemporaries was the fact that in the first decades of the nineteenth century the distinction between making and selling was yet to be clearly defined, despite the claim of some historians that the first half of the century witnessed 'the decline of the craftsman/retailer' and 'the emergence of specialist retailing.'[286] As one

[282] 'Gentlemen and Their Tradesmen', *Morning Chronicle*, Tuesday November 3, 1829; 'The Lawyer's Wife and Shoemaker's Cook', *Censor* (Nov. 29, 1828), 99.
[283] Francis Allen, *A Complete English Dictionary* (London, 1764); John Ash, *The New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1795).
[284]*The Book of English Trades* (London, 1818), iv.
[285] 'British Catalogue. *Miscellanies*', *British Critic*, 25 (Jan. 1805), 94-95.
[286] Geoffrey Crossick, 'The Petite Bourgeoisie in Nineteenth-Century Britain: the Urban and Liberal Case', Geoffrey Crossick & Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (eds.) *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1984), 63.

contemporary noted, ‘a bookseller sometimes literally makes a book’ and many other trades actually ‘confound making and dealing.’[287]

This ambiguity with regard to the term ‘tradesman’ is crucial to our inquiry since it suggests that even if one could, following the Southern linguistic tradition, distinguish shopkeepers from mechanics; it was still possible for them, in some contexts, to be perceived as belonging to the same tribe. In the case of the London University, although Campbell and Brougham made clear that their intended students were the shopkeepers, this did not prevent others from associating the institution with artisanal elements. Even some defenders of the new university could, in their writing, slip into the other meaning of the term trade when talking about the institution. For instance, one author lauded the potential of the university in forming what he called a ‘useful citizen’. His illustration of the ‘useful citizen’, however, revolved around the world of skill-based trades with regard to which which he claimed that Americans were at that moment better off than the English: ‘an English artisan, who emigrates to their shores has served seven years to learn how to make a pair of shoes, and at 50 knows nothing more’, but ‘an American of the same age is a farmer, carpenter, and a dozen other things, and equally expert at all’.[288]

Perhaps what made this association with the artisanal spirit feasible was the fact that some of the new subjects that the university intended to offer were themselves closely related to the useful arts. Two of them were ‘Chemistry Applied to the Arts’ and ‘Mechanics Applied to the Arts’. Many of the applicants to the professorships of these two subjects had not received a liberal education, and their knowledge was

[287] ‘The Names of Trades’, *Newcastle Magazine* (Mar, 1823), 125-126.
[288] ‘Progress of the London University’, *New Monthly Magazine*, 25:97 (1829: Jan), 395.

mainly the product of their first-hand experience as functioning mechanics and artisans. For example, Charles Toplis, a candidate for practical mechanics, recalled that 'From the earliest age up to thirty I was in almost daily familiarity with mill-work and with the processes of preparing spinning and weaving wool cotton &c.' He then boasted that 'The workshop of artisans and manufacturers, as well as those for the fabrication of machines of almost every description; from mill work to watch-work have been freely open to me'.[289] Many of them also had strong connections with the Mechanics' Institutes. 'I have delivered lectures at the Leith Mechanics' Institution to numerous classes' wrote John Anderson, a candidate for 'Chemistry Applied to the Arts'.[290] Testimonies in support of Toplis' application came from the members of the London Mechanics Institution, including Thomas Snowdown Peckston, the vice president.[291] Hence, the ambiguity of the term 'tradesmen' and the institutional arrangements that introduced subjects connected to useful arts contributed to the occasional collapse of the distinction between shopkeepers and the inferior artisans in the discourse of the London University. This reinforced the picture of the conflict between the university and its opponents as a battle between the gentlemanly versus the vulgar. The founders of the university were aware of the negative implication of the idea of status distinction upon their potential students. In the next part we shall see how they dealt with this problem, and how their move to describe tradesmen as the middle classes was a significant part of this engagement.

[289] University College London, CA/A, Charles Toplis to the Council of the University of London, November 1829.
[290] CA/A, John Anderson to Leonard Horner, 12 April 1828.
[291] CA/A, Thomas Snowdon Peckston to Charles Toplis, 11th November 1829.

The Founders and the Idea of Status Distinction in Education

There are two main ways in which the founders dealt with the problem of status distinction. The first was by raising doubts on the credibility of status distinction itself. Perhaps the best example was Campbell's questioning of the traditional distinction between trades and professions. Some historians laud the university as the first in England for professional education.[292] However they paid little attention to the tension between professions and trades, and its significance to the foundation. Literature in the period emphasised the distinction between the inferior trades and the superior professions.[293] The adjective 'liberal' normally attached to the word 'professions' was a status marker of the social group. According to O'Day, the professions acquired prestige through what was perceived as the parallel between the nature of their role in society and that of the aristocracy. This included, among other things, minimal concern for economic incentives, emphasis on the need for education, and non-manual skills which involved 'the giving of advice based on intellectual expertise as well as experience' and 'the execution of magisterial duties.'[294] In other words, the members of the professions were seen as the main bearers of the gentlemanly ethos among the middle classes.

However, by the early nineteenth century, the exclusiveness of the liberal professions as a privileged category was not completely invulnerable. The status distinction between the liberal professions and trade or commerce could easily collapse in discourses such as finance and political economy. For instance, when

[292] Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education 1780-1870* (London, 1960), 119.
[293] L, 'On the Choice of Trades or Professions for Young Men', *Belfast Monthly Magazine,* 10:58 (May 31, 1813), 302; Penelope Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London, 1995), 19.

[294] Rosemary O' Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450-1800: Servants of the Commonweal* (Harlow, 2000), 28.

Charles James Fox stated to the House of Commons that '[t]here were three species of income which were open to taxation' – which were 'what a man drew annually from his land, from the funds, or from his commercial pursuits' – some gentlemen intervened mentioning 'the incomes of professional men'. Fox then responded by saying 'that the liberal arts were entitled to the most respectful notice; but in this point of view, they were only to be regarded as species of commerce.'[295] This means that, one could dissolve the status distinction between the liberal professions and trade simply by redefining them as types of commercial activity. As if aware of this possibility, Campbell, in his defence of the proposed London University, ridiculed the liberal professions and their privileged status.

'I have been asked', Campbell wrote, 'if there are not plenty of places already existing for educating men for the learned and liberal professions'; to which he replied, 'thousands who have not the honour of belonging to those professions, are nevertheless desirous of knowledge and education.' The objection, for him, implied 'an opinion that if you educate the priest and lawyer and physician WELL, you need not trouble yourself farther about the liberal education of society.'[296] Campbell did not stop there, but further tried to undermine the credibility of the status distinction by arguing that actually the liberal professions could be understood as a form of trade:

> Let the mercer give me his stuff for nothing, and I will confess his vocation to be liberal. Let the physician give me prescriptions for his stuffs gratis, and I shall think the same. But the physician sells his *prescriptions* – the priest his exhortations – and the lawyer his eloquence; whilst I am obliged to call this sale not a trade, but a liberal

[295] 'Business', *Lloyd's Evening Post*, December 15, 1797 - December 18, 1797.
[296] Campbell, 'Suggestions', 405.

> profession. We are all traders, and I am inclined to call those professional men the tradesmen, who have the fewest debts.[297]

Clearly Campbell was trying to modify the terms of the argument by reversing the traditional normative order of the liberal professions and the trades. Although he made no mention of liberal education, it was actually part of his wider critical concern with the traditional ethos. Those professions were identified as liberal because their members were considered gentlemen and they usually received a liberal education. So when he claimed that 'we are all traders', Campbell deliberately denied the determination of one's identity in terms of whether or not one had received a liberal education..

Another example of a direct form of engagement with the idea of status distinction can be found in the debate over the use of the word 'university' in the title of the institution. Despite the evident unfamiliarity of his potential students with advanced education, Campbell was adamant that the institution should be called a university which he simply defined as 'an establishment availing itself of all the experience and experiments that can be appealed to for facilitating the art of teaching.'[298] In calling the institution a 'university' Campbell refused to recognise the old habit of associating higher education with higher social status. Later, a critic who despised this move observed that '[t]he employment of the word "University", though it properly describes the nature of the institution and the extent of the instruction, introduces idea of privilege and discipline which have no reference to the new establishment.'[299] Copleston, too, was reluctant to accept the use of the title

[297] Ibid., 406.
[298] Campbell, 'Proposal'.
[299] 'London University', *The Times*, Saturday November 10, 1827, 2.

'university' by the new institution, since it was clear to him that the establishment was not interested in the cultivation of the manners and morals of its student body; it thus lacked the most important elements that constituted the highest form of education.[300] Even a gentleman who lauded the intention of the founders in extending education to tradesmen preferred to call the institution a school as he believed 'the title of London University promises too much to yield adequate performance.'[301] However, no matter what his critics thought of his decision to call the institution a university, the message of Campbell was clear, i.e., considerations of social status should no longer determine the use of the title university in England.

Another type of critique of status distinction that came to the fore in the rhetoric of the founders was the characterisation of the debate about education as a Manichean struggle between the general public on the one hand and their unjust and oppressive superiors on the other. It was reported that Brougham, in a meeting held among the founders of the university, affirmed that the object of the institution 'was to extend the inestimable blessings of literary and scientific education, without which all riches are as mere dross – rank an empty bubble – and power an instrument not made for the happiness, but for the injury of mankind (cheers).'[302] Brougham and the other founders thought that when the Mechanics' Institution was established, 'the labouring classes would acquire such a degree of knowledge, that those who were accustomed to being called their superiors from the adventitious circumstances of birth, wealth, and power, would no longer be able to maintain their station unless supported by real and scientific knowledge.'[303] The fact that this was said in a meeting for the establishment of the London University suggests that the founders

[300] [Copleston], 'The London University', 270
[301] 'London University', *Imperial Magazine*, 8:93 (Sep. 1826), 825.
[302] 'London University', *Observer*, July 3, 1825, 2.
[303] Ibid.

conceived both the middle-class institution and the Mechanics' Institutes as part of the broader ideological revolt against the unjustified superiority of the upper classes

This resentment towards status distinction in education ran parallel to those in other institutional domains. One writer, for instance, used the Game Laws as a metaphor to illustrate the problem of unequal status embedded in educational thinking. The popularization of education, for him, had alarmed 'a pretty numerous set of people, who would fain enact literary game-laws, and look upon a reading mechanic as a poacher, who has no right to partake of the amusements of his betters.'[304] The use of this metaphor was timely; as around the same time parliamentary debates over the Game Laws were taking place in order 'to consider whether Parliament could not give protection to the amusements of country gentlemen, without doing injustice to the community at large.'[305] In general, therefore, it is clear that the explicit criticism of status distinction was common among the founders and supporters of the university.

The founders, however, had another way of dealing with the dominant notion of status distinction, that is, by asserting their case in terms of their socio-economic understanding of the issue. Understanding this type of engagement is particularly important as it relates to our main concern about how the notion of middle-class education represented a specific cultural attitude that was incompatible with traditional views regarding liberal education. In referring to tradesmen as the middle classes, the founders framed the case in terms of the need to fill an institutional and social gap in university education, while at the same time concealing the fact that the gap itself presupposed a still contested socio-economic definition of an

[304] 'On the Education of the People *versus* the Monopolists of Education', *Literary Chronicle*, 6:334 (Oct. 8, 1825), 654.
[305] HC Deb March 7, 1825, vol. 12, col 950.

educational need. Such a reference, therefore, provided an alternative and more productive way of thinking about the eligibility of tradesmen for university education other than the restrictive one based on the status distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen. In other words, the moment tradesmen were identified as the part of the middle classes, the social group was freed from being the disadvantageous subject of status consideration. One of the discursive practices that amplified their identity in a socio-economic rather than status terms was the use of variables such as income, wealth and financial capacity in explaining the existing educational inequality and its solution.

From the writings of Brougham and Campbell we can see how in comparison to their superiors, the middling ranks were portrayed as an unfortunate group who were deprived of university education due to their economic and financial inferiority: 'The hundreds of tradesmen and other inhabitants of London, who were debarred from sending their children to the universities by considerations of distance and expense, might have them instructed in London at an expense of ten pounds a year.'[306] Another writer in the *Edinburgh Review* made the same complaint: the ancient universities 'were only open to the most wealthy; therefore, all the middle classes must let their sons grow up, with such learning as they could pick up at a grammar school; and forthwith, plunge into business'.[307] Even when explicit criticisms were directed at the ancient universities, the tendency was to highlight the economic and financial standing of their students, so as to give the impression that it was due to that reason alone that they were admitted. For example, a defender of the new university observed that, Oxford and Cambridge were the 'the fashionable receptacles for the sons of the wealthy' where 'many as blindly and absurdly ape the

[306] HC Deb Friday June 3, 1825, col 1034-1035.
[307] 'New University in London', 350.

customs of the higher and wealthier classes of society.'[308] Hence, the claim made by Campbell and Brougham about the educational need for tradesmen was only meaningful when set against the background of this socio-economic inequity between the upper, middle and lower classes. It was for this reason that we can say that the call for a middle-class university education was actually incompatible with the notion of status distinction that underpinned liberal education at that time.

However, if that was really the case, why did the founders sometimes refer to the educational scheme that they were offering as liberal education and liberal arts? Brougham, for example, stated in Parliament that the object of the university was to deliver to the inhabitants of London 'a liberal and scientific course of education.'[309] Furthermore, immediately after the formation of the university, it was evident that official publications of the university tended to classify some subjects such as classics, mathematics, political economy, natural philosophy, and many others as part of 'a general liberal education.'[310] Sheldon Rothblatt uses this classification as evidence that educational schemes in the period may still be designated liberal even if the subjects were not confined to classics and mathematics.[311] This historical approach, that considers a scheme liberal if it was designated so, is in line with the argument of Kimball that in order to understand liberal education historically one should follow the words 'liberal education' and 'liberal arts' through historical

[308] 'The London University', *Monthly Magazine*, 1:2 (Feb 1826), 152.
[309] HC Deb Friday June 3, 1825, col 1034.
[310] *Statement by the Council*, 12.
[311] Sheldon Rothblatt, 'The Limbs of Osiris: Liberal Education in the English Speaking World,' in Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock (eds.) *The European and American University since 1800* (Cambridge, 1993), 42.

texts.[312] This approach is no longer adequate as it fails to take into account that liberal education and education were used interchangeably in the eighteenth-century.

At the level of intellectual culture, it might seem appropriate to conclude that the reformers just had a different idea of liberal education. As we have shown, however, when reformers called for the extension of education, they also, however implicitly, broke away from the eighteenth-century meaning of education itself. However, since it was habitual for contemporaries to refer to education as liberal education and vice versa, reformers also were more likely to carry on with this habit, thus sometimes referring to their new scheme as liberal education. This was indeed very different from the view of traditional liberal education, as it presupposed a wider and new meaning of education which, unlike the old one, was not grounded in the liberal/illiberal distinction. In other words, when the founders referred to their scheme as liberal education, this was not because they really subscribed to the notion of liberal education, but simply because they were in the habit of equating education with liberal education. Therefore, if we are to gain a handle on the shift in the educational culture of this period, it is important for us to distinguish between the superficial and the concrete usage of the phrase 'liberal arts' or 'liberal education' by the contemporaries, especially in the reformist discourse.

Having addressed this objection we shall proceed to the final part of this chapter which aims to show that the opponents of the university really understood the social character of the university in terms of status distinction. It will show how the critics and satirists of the university ignored the claim by the founders that it was meant for the middle classes, and instead tended to portray it as a vulgar or cockney

[312] Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: a History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York, 1986), 9.

institution, not bothering to distinguish it from the other two institutions intended for the lower orders. In showing that this tendency was the result of the cultural habit of viewing tradesmen as non-gentlemen and vulgar, the following discussion will reinforce the thesis of this chapter that the idea of middle-class university education, as advanced by the founders, represented a profound cultural challenge to liberal education.

'The March of Intellect': London University as a Vulgar Institution

Certainly not all opponents of the university disagreed with the founders about the need for a middle-class university. A critic, for instance, admitted that one plausible reason to establish a new university was because 'the advancement of our commercial and manufacturing interests has produced a still greater proportional augmentation of what may be termed the middling orders of society'.[313] However, as is shown below, most critics and satirists were insensitive to this point since they did not view tradesmen as middle-class but as vulgar/non-gentlemen. Our examination of the critical representations of the London University as a vulgar institution will be based on a contemporary discourse known as 'the march of intellect' or 'the march of mind' that stretched between 1825 and 1830. As this discourse has received some attention in the historical literature, we shall first look at what historians have said about it, and then explain how our approach to this topic is slightly different.

[313] Christianus, *A Letter to the Right Hon. Robert Peel, on the Subject of the London University* (London, 1828), 2-3.

The phrase 'the march of intellect' or 'the march of mind' was commonly used in the 1820s and 30s to refer to the three of the reformist educational institutions, the London University, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and Mechanics' Institutes. A recent attempt to explain the phrase by historian Brian Maidment is worth quoting at length:

> The march of intellect is, a convenient shorthand term for a whole range of social and cultural shifts in the first half of the nineteenth century, centrally concerned with evolving technology, the growth of mass literacy and widening access to print culture, through which class structure, as much as the economic order, was being redefined by education, invention and social aspiration.[314]

Another historian, Rosemary Ashton, regards the term as representing a form of activity centred in Bloomsbury where London University and SDUK were located: 'Bloomsbury was the main London location for the activities collectively known as "the march of the mind" or "the march of intellect".' She further remarks that the phrase describes 'the efforts of leading progressives, many of whom were associated both with the agitation for parliamentary and electoral reform which culminated in the first Great Reform Act of 1832 and with the education movement.'[315]

Both Maidment and Ashton, therefore, see the march of intellect as the historical embodiment of the contemporary spirit of progress, social change, and reform. However, this approach pays insufficient attention to the use of the phrase by the contemporaries themselves. They do not ask, for instance, who used the phrase and what for? The term 'the march of intellect' should not be taken at face value as an unproblematic representation of a historical phenomenon, since, as we will show, it

[314] Brian Maidment, *Comedy, Caricature and the Social Order, 1820-1850* (Manchester, 2013), 177. In his most recent publication he similarly describes it as 'that set of socio- economic, cultural, and scientific changes that underpinned the transformation in the class structure and economic base of British society in the first half of the nineteenth century.' Brian Maidment, 'Imagining the Cockney University: Humorous Poetry, the March of Intellect, and the Periodical Press, 1820-1860', *Victorian Poetry*, 52:1 (Spring 2014), 21.

[315] Rosemary Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (New Haven and London, 2012), 21.

was actually exclusively employed by the critics of the educational movement. The supporters of popular education did not generally use the term in describing their project, and they were also aware of it being used ironically by their opponents. Hence, a defender of popular education noted how the movement 'has been, in derision, termed the "March of Intellect?".'[316] On the part of critics of the university, on the other hand, the march of intellect was an expression of their anxiety about the subversion of the idea of liberal education and of cultural assumptions that the old society generated based upon status hierarchy.

The first thing to acknowledge is that for the critics, the march of intellect was conceived of as a real event that was affecting the thinking and behaviour of their contemporaries. Hence, in his letter to John Rickman, Robert Southey wrote that 'The march of intellect has had an odd effect upon Sharon Turner [the historian]. He thinks past history is likely to attract so little attention in future, and carry with it so little interest, that he advised me to begin my series of British Biography with Sir Wm. Temple!' He then continued, 'a few steps more in the march and we shall have to begin the history of philosophy with Jeremy Bentham and the history of England with Joseph Hume; and the history of literature with the foundation of the London University.'[317] The march of intellect was also spoken of as something that was nationally pervasive. W. Hersee, for instance, felt that lately everyone seemed to be talking about that subject.[318] Five years later, in 1834, another author remarked that he had heard a lot of discussions about the march of intellect.[319]

[316] Henry Martin, *Observations on the Importance and Advantages of the Education of the People* (London, 1826), 11.
[317] Charles Southey (ed.) *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, 6 vols. (London, 1850), vi. 105.
[318] W. Hersee, 'The March of Intellect', *Gentleman's Magazine* (March 1828), 195.
[319] Lomus, 'The March of Intellect', *Metropolitan Magazine*, 10:40 (Aug. 1834), 404.

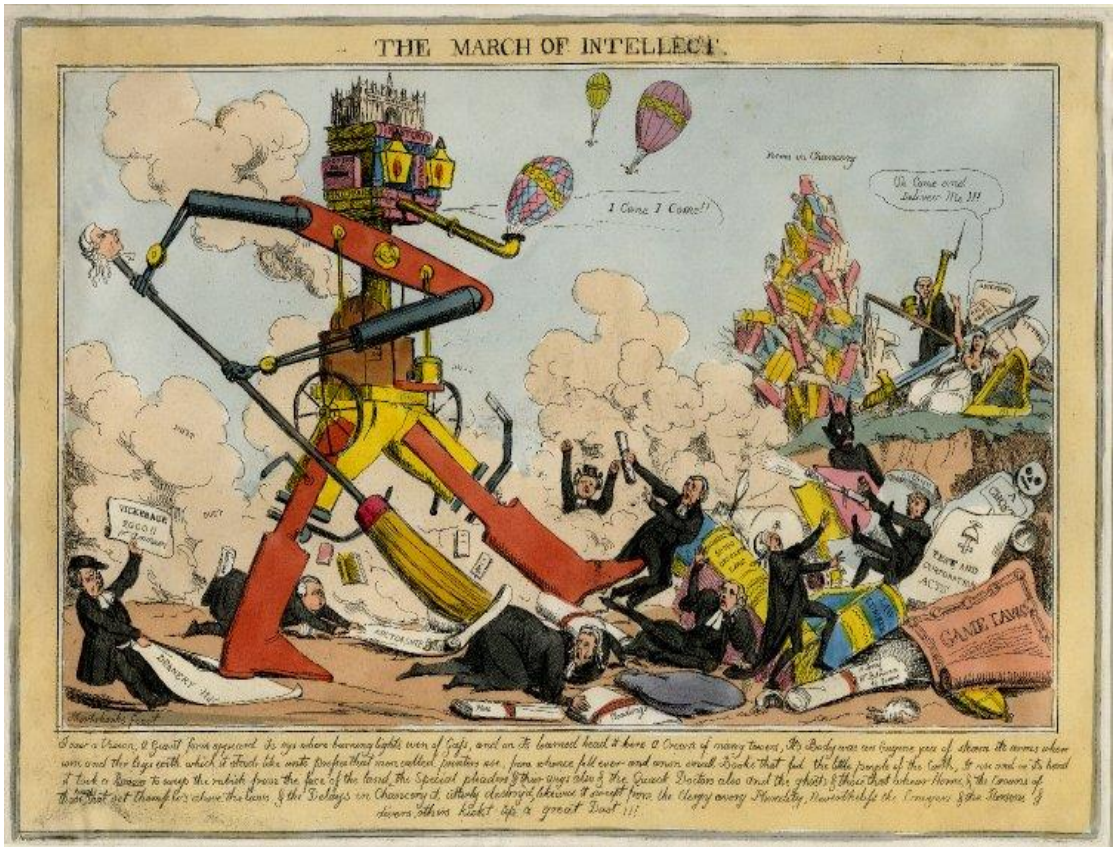

Figure 1: *The March of Intellect* (c. 1828 – 1830). British Museum Collection Online.

A primary characteristic of this discourse was its tendency to represent the reformist educational movement at the same time as a radical socio-political statement. As status distinction was constitutive of the traditional meaning of education, such a call for reform inevitably caused anxiety, not only over the preservation of existing educational arrangements, but also over the maintenance of social order. The above caricature (Fig. 1), for instance, communicated the feeling that the march of intellect was sweeping away the socio-politico establishment. Campaigns against the Test and Corporation Acts and Game Laws in the 1820s were causing real anxiety among the defenders of the establishment. The irresistible wave of change and destruction was personified in the moving machine that warned those who were in its way, 'I

come I come'. On top of it was the depiction of the London University and piles of books, all of which symbolised the blend of the socio-political and the educational in a specific cultural unity.

As the representation of social classes in the march of intellect corresponded to the binary status distinction, it did not recognise the 'middle classes' as a meaningful category. In regards to the London University, this representation had its basis in the traditional view of tradesmen as non-gentlemen/vulgar. Hence, from 1825, there was a propensity among the critics of the university to portray it as a cockney university. Since its first appearance in a poem published in *John Bull*, the term 'Cockney University' had acquired widespread currency in the print culture of the period.[320] It is vital, however, to locate the significance of this derogatory term in the wider cultural context of the period. The 1820s witnessed the increasing use of 'the Cockney' as the personification of vulgarity.[321] 'Cockney University' was one of a number of cockney-based oxymorons frequently used in the satirical literature of the decade. Another theme, for instance, was the 'Cockney Squire' which was the story of a man from a humble background who after making some fortune in trade tried to become a gentleman, but tragically ended up becoming 'more and more under the dominion of his servants.'[322] Again, the underlying message of these themes was clear; the transgression of the socio-cultural boundaries that divided the gentleman and the vulgar was unnatural and futile.

The representation of the London University as a cockney institution was manifested in the tendency to portray the students of the establishment as members of the lower orders. The 'Cockney College' poem, for instance, began thus:

[320] Maidment, 'Imagining the Cockney University', 29.
[321] 'Character of a Cockney', *Hull Packet*, Monday September 1, 1823.
[322] L.P, 'A Cockney Squire', *Weekly Entertainer*, 9:5 (Feb 2, 1824), 69.

Come bustle, my neighbours,
give over your labours,
Leave digging, and delving, and churning.[323]

While another rhyme published in *The Age* reads:

March, march, dustmen and coal-heavers,
Doff your great castors for brims of less border,
Assume trencher caps in the room of your old beavers,
And march off to school at great Intellect's order.[324]

In one of the well-known caricatures entitled *Cockney College Cartoon* (Fig. 2) – published in February 1826 – Brougham himself was portrayed as a blacksmith surrounded by the potential students of the university, all of whom, from their attire and dialogues, were clearly from a lower-class background. However, we should bear in mind that the vulgar or cockney types represented in such images were defined not in contrast to the middle or upper classes in a socio-economic sense, but, to what was gentlemanly and liberal.

[323] 'The Cockney University', *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, Saturday July 16, 1825.
[324] G. 'The London University. March of Intellect', *The Age*, Sunday November 18, 1827.

Figure 2: *Cockney College Cartoon* (February 1826). University College London Library Digital Collections.

Furthermore, the excessive depiction of hand-based activities in these representations reinforced the framing of the issue in terms of status distinction. Whether in the emphasis on digging and churning, or in the portrayal of Brougham holding a hammer, all generated the picture of vulgarity contra gentlemanliness. However given the demographic of the students which the London University was trying to attract, why did the satirists and critics avoid including activities such as retailing in their depiction of the potential students? It is crucial to emphasise here that as tradesmen were seen as non-gentlemen/vulgar rather than as middle class, they were not seen as a distinctive group, and became commingled with the inferior artisans and mechanics. In order to distinguish sharply between vulgarity and gentlemanliness, the critics naturally used the most typical features of each side.

The basis of this characterisation was none other than the eighteenth-century understanding that, unlike the useful or mechanical arts, the liberal arts depended 'more on the mind than that of the hand' and consisted 'more in *Speculation* than *Operation*.'[325] It was also assumed that in everyday face-to-face interaction one could identify a member of the liberal professions simply by examining his thought and conversation, while the tradesman or artisan could be known 'by his knees, his fingers, or his shoulders.'[326] Therefore, the most physical and menial vocations would be the most effective representations of vulgarity. In this scheme, the use of retailing as an example would be inadequate in sharpening the distinction. Hence when a writer claimed that the knowledge 'professed to be taught by march-of-intellect societies and the London University, is *not useful* or good for the classes for which it is chiefly designed', the classes that he had in mind were simply 'the numerous and industrious and well-meaning class' whose education would waste 'a vast amount of labour and time.'[327]

The supporters of the university themselves realised that by calling the university a cockney institution their opponents were discrediting it in terms of the gentleman/vulgar status distinction. A defender of the university observed that anyone who called the institution cockney was 'himself so innately vulgar, that he stupidly attributes vulgarity to everything in his neighbourhood.' He then proceeded to ridicule the habit of treating anything related to Oxford, Cambridge, and the country as genteel, while attributing 'everything permanently connected with this great metropolis, however enlarged and intellectual its object, as *cockneyish*.' It has

[325] N. Bailey, *The Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, 2nd edition (London, 1731), 445. For the discussion of the use of the head and hand metaphor in British educational writings see Steven Shapin and Barry Barnes, 'Head and Hand: Rhetorical Resources in British Pedagogical Writings, 1770-1850', *Oxford Review of Education,* 2:3 (1976), 231-254.
[326] 'Untitled Item', *Rambler,* 4:173 (Nov 12, 1751), 69.
[327] 'On the March of Intellect and Universal Education', *Fraser's Magazine,* 2:8 (Sept. 1830), 163-164.

also been noted that the attribution of vulgarity to the university reflected an indifference to the distinctiveness of the middle classes. 'We are also quite at a loss to understand', complained an observer, 'how the danger will be increased, because the education is to be bestowed on an "*underbred cockney population"* (Fine word, that "*underbred*!") especially as applied by a profligate vulgar jester to the numerous and intelligent class occupying the middle rank in this vast metropolis'.[328] It is clear that in his eyes, the opponents of the new university purposely avoided saying anything about the institution existing for the middle classes in order to discredit it.

The use of status distinction in the representation of the London University was not only restricted to caricatures and poetry. It was also apparent in sober critical prose. In a pamphlet entitled *Observations of the Probable Failure of the London University*, published in 1825, an evaluation was offered in the same terms. The author's ridicule of the demand to extend university education to Londoners was reminiscent of an old attitude towards education commonly associated with tradesmen:

> Nothing would be more absurd than for a youth, after an education which embraced the elementary principles of mathematics, astronomy, algebra, history, the earlier classics, and last, not least, the redoubted science of political economy; to be found weighing tea, coffee, and French prunes behind the counter of a city grocer. This education would *refine his mind*, it was only necessary that he should be able to *refine sugar*.[329]

However, later, while discussing the injurious effect of the broader movement of popular education, the author no longer alluded to tradesmen per se; rather he began to refer to the vulgar in general. Education, the author affirmed, should not be

[328] 'The London University and the "smutty gazette"', *Examiner*, 911 (July 17, 1825), 447.
[329] *Observations of the Probable Failure of the London University, And Thoughts of the Present System of Education at Cambridge. By a Member of the University* (London, 1825), 3.

extended, as it was meant to preserve status distinction: 'Society never can allow a general education; it may be a very beautiful theory, but let us calmly look at the result. Were we all equally educated, the lowest possible class of servants, the very shoe-black who wipes your shoes, would have the same fine feelings as yourself.'[330] The leap from shopkeeper to shoe-black here did not signify a significant shift in meaning since they were all still on the illiberal side of the divide.

In a similar spirit, another writer affirmed that because 'the nature of our constitution requires various degrees of rank in society', the extension of education was hardly acceptable since 'equality of mental acquirements is that which above all things equalizes the various ranks of society, and impairs that graduated subordination which ought to exist for the benefit of the whole community.'[331] Some critics did talk about the extension of education simply as a project that 'levels all distinctions'.[332] However, there was also a notable tendency among them to liken it to the world 'turned upside down.' This habit reflected the anxiety over the possible inversion of the liberal/illiberal distinction. For instance, the underlying anxiety over the institutional threat of the London University to the survival of Oxford and Cambridge was expressed in terms of the undesirable triumph of the vulgar over the gentlemanly. As one writer remarked:

> learning, Sir, once the privileged, the peculiar property of Sanctity and Churchmen, has been ruthlessly plundered, polluted, and shared by the common herd; the sanctuary has been invaded, and all the very ignoble mob have access to the sacred fount …. The classic Cam, the learned Isis, to be ignominiously eclipsed by the sullied streams about the ooze from cockney Gower-street![333]

[330] Ibid., 29.
[331] 'Grinfield's Reply to Mr. Brougham on Education', *Christian Remembrancer*, August 1825, 489.
[332] George Macfarren, *The March of Intellect: a Monodramatic Bagatelle* (London, 183-?), 5.
[333] A Cantab, 'The March of Intellect … ', *Morning Chronicle*, Tuesday, December 25, 1827.

However, the most common theme that reflected the deep anxiety over the world turned upside down was the concern about the negligence of duties to superiors as a result of education. For instance, while lamenting the undesired impact of the diffusion of knowledge on his servants, a seasoned gentleman told his audience how his private room for reading was disrespectfully used by his coachman in his absence. 'To this spot the philosopher of hay and oats was in the habit of retiring to solace himself with copying the style of Richardson's love letters, of which I found several brilliant specimens.'[334] In Thomas Peacock's satirical novel, *Crotchet Castle*, one character angrily remarked that 'I am out of all patience with this march of mind. Here has my house been nearly burned down, by my cook taking it into her head to study hydrostatics, in a sixpenny tract, published by the Steam Intellect Society.'[335] In the following satirical rhyme by William Thomas Montcrieff even vulgar work spaces were becoming more refined.

So much does intellect increase,
In manner systematic, -
Our kitchens smell of classic Greece,
Our garrets all are attic!

In the *domestic offices*
(For kitchen's vulgar now)
The march of mind steps by degrees,
And reaches *all below*.[336]

An inverted pyramid was commonly used as a metaphor to illustrate the threat of the existing world being turned upside down. As Briggs suggests, it was not unusual for

[334] 'The Rising Generation and the March of Mind', *The Mirror* (Sept. 11, 1830), 215.
[335] Thomas Love Peacock, *Crotchet Castle*, 2nd edition (London, 1837) 288.
[336] William Thomas Montcrieff, *The March of Intellect: a Comic Poem* (London, 1830),16

eighteenth-century contemporaries to imagine the structure of English society through the metaphor of a pyramid.[337] In a critique of Brougham's programme of popular education, one author affirmed that the English social structure 'may be likened in fact to a Pyramid, which is the most lasting of all buildings, in much the same manner as a limited monarchy is the most durable of all governments'.[338] He then argued that it was wise to confine the 'superior sort of education to birth and wealth, which composed for the most part the highest distinctions'. If this was not observed, he believed that the 'well-being of the state' would be threatened.[339]

The author then presented a sketch of a pyramid (Fig. 3) and asked his readers to imagine what the outcome would be if 'the lower class or base' were given the same status as those above it. 'Is not the figure destroyed, and its durability endangered? And if destroyed, is not the constitution, of which it is the resemblance, destroyed too? And must not this be the case when a superior education is extended to the lower classes?'[340]

[337] Briggs, 'The Language of "Class"', 44.
[338] A Country Gentleman, *The Consequences of a Scientific Education to the Working Classes of this Country Pointed out; and the Theories of Mr Brougham on that Subject Confuted* (London, 1826), 4.
[339] Ibid., 9.
[340] Ibid., 11; The supporters of popular education themselves were perfectly aware of this metaphorical use of an inverted pyramid in the polemics of their adversaries. For instance, in personifying his opponents, a writer asked, 'Shall journeymen carpenters be initiated into the mathematics, and our cooks compound their dishes by chymstry? – the world will be turned up-side-down – society be quite subverted! – This monstrous, and as much out of the nature of things as a pyramid with its base in the air. 'On the Education of the People versus the Monopolists of Education', 655.

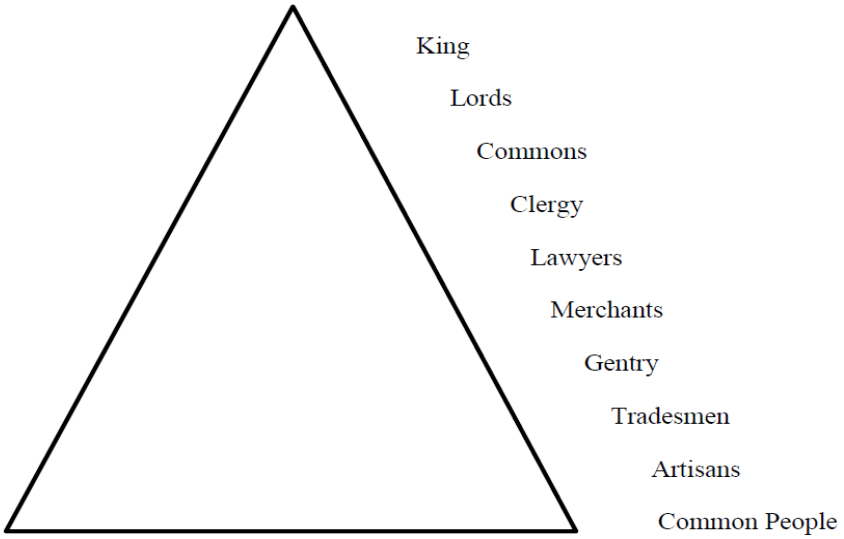

Figure 3: Pyramid

Then again, the 'lower class' referred to here was not the socio-economic 'lower orders' as commonly described by the founders, but rather the class understood in terms of the liberal/illiberal status distinction. For, although the pyramid contains several categories, the key distinction is between 'Gentry' and 'Common People'. It is evident here that tradesmen and artisans were considered to be 'Common People' while those above them were all 'Gentry'. Hence, regardless of how many categories were listed from the top to the bottom of the pyramid, the main issue was always about the activity of the base (common people) versus those above them.

More than just a set of amusing, comical and critical representations of the university, then, the march of intellect was a reflection of the psyche of those who employed it in their rhetoric. This psyche is mainly characterised by its faithfulness to the assumptions underlying the ideal of liberal education, the most important of which was the centrality of status distinction to the meaning and practice of

education. The presence of this assumption in their pictorial, prosaic, and poetic depictions of the social character of the institution suggests that as a socio-cultural phenomenon, the hegemony of liberal education could manifest itself through various modes of representation. More importantly, as this discussion shows that the attribution of vulgarity to tradesmen and the university was not a deliberate misrepresentation but resulted from their adherence to the old assumption, it reinforces the main thesis of this chapter that the promotion of middle-class university education was a crucial part of the cultural challenge to liberal education.

This chapter began by answering a most basic question, overlooked in earlier studies: who did the founders have in mind when they spoke about the middle classes? From the writings and speeches of Campbell and Brougham it is clear that when they used the term 'middle classes' they meant tradesmen. It has been demonstrated that traditionally not only did tradesmen considered education irrelevant to their vocation, but a large section of the wider culture itself was opposed to the idea of educated tradesmen due to their status as non-gentlemen. Therefore, in offering a university education to a disadvantaged social group, the founders had to discredit their old image as vulgar by emphasising their alternative identity as middle-class, thus shifting the ground of thinking about university education from status distinction to a socio-economic classification. Finally, the cultural character of this struggle for middle-class education is further confirmed by the propensity of the critics to portray the London University as a cockney institution rather than a middle-class one, which was a reflection of their anxiety about the breakdown of the traditional gentlemanly/vulgar distinction. In the next chapter, we shall see how the attitude of the London University towards liberal education was further reflected in its relation to the medical professions.

Chapter Four

From Liberal Profession to Efficient Profession: the Case of the Medical School

The previous chapter described how the promotion of a middle-class university education through the foundation of the London University represented a challenge to traditional liberal education. As a follow-up to the previous discussion, this chapter examines to what extent this shift in attitudes towards liberal education was further manifested in the ways the founders and members of the university conceived the significance of what was traditionally considered as the liberal professions. Generally, historians of the eighteenth century have acknowledged the relatively high social standing of the members of the professions – clergymen, barristers and physicians.[341] As their identity and status were conventionally related to the fact that they were gentlemen and recipients of liberal education, this chapter examines whether or not the foundation of the new university reflected a new evaluation of their cultural significance. This question is particularly relevant since from the very beginning the university offered law and medicine as one part of its curriculum.

However, instead of covering both programmes, this chapter, for reasons that will be explained later, will focus mainly on the medical courses. Basically, it explores the issues surrounding the establishment and early years of the medical school at the institution in the wider context of medical reform at the time. It argues that the nature of the medical education that it envisioned challenged the socio-cultural influence of liberal education on the medical world in four respects; first, unlike the ancient medical institutions, it treated classics and liberal education as secondary or

[341]Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), 73; Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (New York, 2008), 146-147.

accidental rather than essential to the medical profession; second, its propensity to characterise the medical profession mainly in terms of medical science bolstered the sense of equality among the practitioners and rendered irrelevant the old notion of medical hierarchy; third, its institutional atmosphere itself was not conducive to the primacy of status hierarchy among practitioners; and finally its tendency to portray the ideal character of a practitioner as an efficient practitioner provided a rival to the old idea of the gentleman-physician.

From the very early stages of the foundation, Thomas Campbell made clear his intention that a medical school should be part of the planned university.[342] The *Prospectus* of the institution, published in February 1826, officially made public the intention of the founders to establish a medical school. As it was believed that medical schools could only be established in large towns, the potential of London as a suitable site for the fulfilment of such a vision was greatly emphasised.[343] The case for the medical school also became significant since the London University presented itself as an alternative to Oxford and Cambridge. For instance, in the first statement by the council, it was stressed that 'neither Oxford nor Cambridge supply a professional education in Law or in Medicine: there are Professors in both branches, it is true; but it is avowedly no part of the system of either place to qualify a man for the exercise of any other profession than the Church.'[344] The medical programme at the new university offered subjects such as anatomy, physiology and surgery, and professors for each of them were appointed between 1827 and 1828. Among them were Granville Sharp Pattison (Anatomy), Charles Bell (Physiology),

[342] W.R Merrington, *University College Hospital and its Medical School: a history* (London, 1976), 2; Charles Newman, *The Evolution of Medical Education in the Nineteenth* Century (London, 1957), 113.
[343] *University of London: Prospectus* (London, 1826), 2.
[344] *Statement by the Council of the University of London, explanatory of its nature and objects* (London, 1827), 8.

Robert Grant (Comparative Anatomy), and Anthony Todd Thomson (*Materia Medica* and Pharmacy).[345]

In the wider academic structure of the university, the medical programme was placed under a broader category of professional education which included not only Law but also new courses like 'Chemistry Applied to the Arts' and 'Mechanical Philosophy Applied to the Arts'.[346] From this range of subjects it is clear that the university had a different conception of the profession than the one reflected in the existing idea of liberal professions. However there are several reasons why the medical course is chosen as a case study here. First, unlike the other programmes, the curriculum was underpinned by a relatively coherent professional ideology associated with medical practice. Even law could not match its medical counterpart in this respect. In the early years of the university, not only were the medical professors the most numerous, but they were also the most conscious of their collective institutional interest.[347] However the most important reason for this selection is the fact that the early nineteenth century witnessed a call for reform in medical education and practice, which touched upon themes that were closely related to liberal education, such as the distinction among medical practitioners between gentlemen and non-gentlemen, and the relevance of a classical education for medical students. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to reveal the collective attitude of the medical school towards liberal education by locating its significance in the context of the debate between the reformers and the defenders of the medical establishment. In terms of sources, this chapter mainly uses introductory lectures

[345] *Second Statement by the Council of the University of London, explanatory of the plan of instruction* (London, 1828), 12-13.
[346] Ibid., 11.
[347] For instance, despite the clear injunction in the Statement by the Council that '[t]he professors will have no power collectively as a body' the medical professors were the first to voice their views as an academic body on such issues as the accreditation of their programme. University College London, Council Minutes, 'Session of Council, 22nd March 1828.'

about medical subjects that were delivered at the university by Charles Bell, John Connolly and Robert Grant. These lectures, given between 1827 and 1834, enable us to identify the general disposition of the medical programme towards medical reform on the one hand and liberal education on the other. Other important sources are the commentaries and remarks on the significance of the medical programme by major medical journals, of which the two most important were *The Lancet* and *London Medical Gazette,* which represented opposing camps on the subject of reform.

According to Irvine Loudon, the establishment of the medical school at the London University was one of the main 'products of the movement for reform'[348] Earlier, S.W.F. Holloway and Charles Singer noted that the establishment of the medical programme at the university 'came at a turning-point in the social and intellectual history of medicine in general and of medical education in England in particular.'[349] Despite this general recognition, however, the relationship between medical reform and the medical programme is yet to receive serious scrutiny. If we want to discern how the connection between the reform movement and the university programme reflected a particular attitude towards traditional liberal education, it is necessary to begin with an acknowledgment that medical education at the institution was intended for a class of medical practitioners known in the period as surgeon-apothecaries or general practitioners. The establishment of the London University, according to Holloway, had for the first time provided university education for

[348] Irvine Loudon, 'Medical Practitioners 1750-1850 and the Period of Medical Reform in Britain', in Andrew Wear (ed.) *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays* (Cambridge, 1992), 219.
[349] Charles Singer and S.W.F. Holloway, 'Early Medical Education in England in Relation to the Pre-History of London University', *Medical History Journal,* 4:1 (Jan. 1960), 1

general practitioners.[350] But, in terms of liberal education, what did it mean to offer a university education for general practitioners in England in the period? To answer this question, we need to understand the context of the medical profession in the period. Therefore, we shall first look at the old hierarchical distinction in the profession and the role of liberal education in sustaining it. This will enable us to establish how far medical reform and the rise of general practitioners in the early nineteenth century challenged such distinctions and severed the link between liberal education and the medical profession.

Traditional Medical Practice and Liberal Education

In the early nineteenth century, medical practitioners were still formally and legally divided into three ranks: physicians, surgeons and apothecaries. This tripartite division was not merely a professional distinction but also a social one. The three 'great divisions, or grades, of the healing art', wrote an observer, 'have become interwoven with the very constitution of society'. The difference between physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, to a certain extent, corresponded to that of the upper, middling and lower ranks of society.[351] In fact, the ratio of physicians to other practitioners fitted the metaphor of English society as a pyramid with just a small elite on the top. As a contemporary noted, 'in London, the physicians are to the surgeons as one to six; to the apothecaries, exclusive of the chemists and druggists, as one to twelve; to both united, as one to eighteen.'[352] This apparent inequality meant that relations between them were 'sometimes soured by rivalry and

[350] S.W.F. Holloway, 'Medical Education in England, 1830-1858: a Sociological Analysis', *History*, 49:167, (January 1964), 299.
[351] 'Medical Education and Professional Grades', *London Medical Gazette*, 13 (London, 1834), 132.
[352] *An Exposition of the State of the Medical Profession in the British Dominions* (London, 1826), 8.

jealousy'.[353] Institutionally, the superiority of physicians over the rest was reflected in the exclusive claim of the Royal College of Physicians to be the regulators of medical practice.[354] Fellows of this institution were only elected from among graduates of the ancient universities.[355] The college, in fact, continuously scorned other rank-and-file practitioners 'who practiced medicine without a thorough liberal education.'[356] Even graduates from Scottish and Continental universities, despite their well-known scientific training, had no access to the upper tiers of the English medical profession. Unlike those institutions, Oxford and Cambridge did not offer a professional course in medicine, rather they emphasised the reading of classical authors such as Galen and Hippocrates. However deficient this education appears to us, it actually fitted the traditional idea of a physician, as not merely a medical practitioner but also a gentleman. In the words of Henry Halford, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, it was important for physicians to 'adopt the sentiments and the manners of a gentleman, by preferring such associates as are distinguished by their elevation of mind, their sound principles, and their good manners.'[357]

Therefore, in terms of forming a physician, liberal education was valued more highly than a professional medical education. When, in March 1834, the parliamentary select committee on medical education asked Halford whether he thought Oxford and Cambridge provided the best medical education, his reply was very revealing:

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[353] Roy Porter, *Disease, Medicine and Society in England, 1550- 1860*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 1993), 29.
[354] Thomas Neville Bonner, *Becoming a Physician: Medical Education in Britain, France, Germany and the United States, 1750-1945* (Oxford, 1995), 63.
[355] Ibid., 63; Florent Palluault, 'Medical Students in England and France 1815-1858' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil Thesis, 2003), 33.
[356] Ibid.
[357] Henry Halford, 'On the Education and Conduct of a Physician', *London Medical Gazette*, 13 (London, 1834). 681.

> I believe that the physic that they may acquire at Oxford and Cambridge is undervalued by those who reproach the Universities for not being schools of physic; but that is of very little importance, if they have their preliminary [liberal] education. They will go and find physic wherever it is to be found afterwards.[358]

In his writing, Halford also maintained that the study of classics was crucial for a prospective physician since not only did it 'expand and enlarge' his mind, but it was also 'fitted to procure him attention and respect in his place in society.' In line with the idea of breadth in education, he further warned against specialisation, as it would not only divert the physician from his object, which was 'the cure of diseases', but would also 'narrow both his resources and his mind, and … make him incur the risk of a failure in the end.'[359] The nature of the practice of physicians also affirmed what was seen as their liberal or enlarged mind.

Just like an ideal gentleman, physicians shunned manual work, in this case represented by practices such as surgery and midwifery. In fact, they hardly touched their patients except to feel their pulse.[360] Rather, the procedure mainly involved a conversation with the patient about his life habits, from which the doctor would 'determine the patient's own "natural" state, and … discern how the patient had deviated from (and might be brought back to) his or her proper nature.'[361] Given this limited engagement with their patients, what legitimised the authority of the physician then was his persona as a learned gentleman. What counted in this respect were his penetrating and comprehensive insights into the physical condition of the

[358] *Report from the Select Committee on Medical Education: Part I Royal College of Physicians* (London, 1834). 9.
[359] Halford, 'Education and Conduct of a Physician', 679-680.
[360] Mark Weatherall, *Gentlemen, Scientists and Doctors: Medicine at Cambridge 1800 -1940* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2000), 10; N.D. Jewson, 'Medical Knowledge and the Patronage System in 18th Century England', Sociology, 8:369 (1974), 374.
[361] Ian A. Burney, 'Medicine in the Age of Reform', in Arthur Burns and Joanna Innes (eds.) *Rethinking the Age of Reform Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 167.

patient, and good advice.[362] Since the early-modern period, the ability to judge the inner state of things and to give good advice was central not only to the practice of physicians but to the members of the liberal professions in general. Good judgment and advice, as Cook reminds us, were not considered the product of knowledge alone; they were also the result of a refined character. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that it was 'the character of the ideal gentleman' himself that substantiated the claim to knowledge.[363] Therefore, it is unsurprising that the liberal education procured from the ancient universities was highly valued, since it transformed 'the student into a physician of good character, who could exercise good judgment and advice: a man of learning.'[364]

Furthermore, the difference between a physician and other practitioners also corresponded to the distinction between a gentleman and a tradesman. A surgeon was a practical man whose area of expertise was 'restricted to the superficial and the specific'.[365] Unlike a physician, theoretically a surgeon was not allowed to provide any internal treatment to a patient such as prescribing medicine.[366] The negative stigma of trade also had an impact on apothecaries since in selling medicines they were inevitably involved in shopkeeping. In the words of Loudon, 'it was the element of the shop' which hindered 'the social advance of the rank-and-file practitioners.'[367] Furthermore, like tradesmen, surgeons and apothecaries were mainly the product of apprenticeships that usually took seven years to complete.

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[362] Ibid., 167.
[363] Susan Lawrence, *Charitable Knowledge: Hospital Pupils and Practitioners in Eighteenth-Century London* (Cambridge, 1996), 230.
[364] Harold J. Cook, 'Good Advice and Little Medicine: The Professional Authority of Early Modern English Physicians', *Journal of British Studies*, 33:1 (Jan. 1994), 4.
[365] Burney, 'Medicine in the Age of Reform', 167- 168.
[366] C.D. O'Malley, 'The English Physician in the Earlier Eighteenth Century', in H.T. Swedenberg, Jr (ed.) *England in the Restoration and Early Eighteenh Century: Essays on Culture and Society* (Los Angeles, 1972), 148.
[367] Irvine Loudon, *Medical Care and the General Practitioner 1750-1850 (*Oxford, 1986), 69.

Therefore, one's status in the medical practice depended on whether one had liberal education or an apprenticeship. It was this question of status distinction and its relationship to education that became one of the main subjects of the debate about medical reform in the early nineteenth century.

The advent of reform had to some extent challenged the existing hierarchical order of the professional world. According to Loudon, the period of medical reform stretched between 1750 and 1850.[368] The subject of reform was very diverse and straddled across the institutional, social and intellectual dimensions of medical education and practice. Perhaps one of the most important elements of the reform period was the rising significance of a new class of practitioners known as surgeon-apothecaries, or, by the early nineteenth century, general practitioners. Particularly between the late eighteenth century and mid-nineteenth century, there was a strong 'hostility and bitterness' between the numerically superior general practitioners and the few but powerful physicians and surgeons.[369] As its name suggests, the general practitioner was a hybrid class, the emergence of which defied the old clear-cut differentiation of practitioners into physician, surgeons, and apothecaries.[370] However, it was not until 1815 that this class was recognised as a distinctive medical group after the passing of the Apothecaries Act. This new legislation, despite its flaws, conferred on general practitioners a respectable status, mainly by allowing them to use the phrase 'medically qualified' after their name.[371]

The act granted authority to the Society of Apothecaries to regulate the qualification of general practitioners, which now included a five-year compulsory apprenticeship,

[368] Loudon, 'Medical Practitioners 1750-1850', 219.
[369] Loudon, *Medical Care and the General Practitioner*, 129.
[370] D.U. Bloor, 'The Rise of the General Practitioner in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 28 (1978), 289.
[371] Loudon, *Medical Care and the General Practitioner*, 173.

and the need to attain the License of the Society of Apothecaries for those who would like to prescribe medicine. By the 1820s some observers realised that general practitioners were not only the largest but the 'most useful class' of medical professionals which, in terms of merit, could not be matched by even the highly esteemed physicians.[372] Several practitioners began to regard themselves as 'physicians to the poor,'[373] thus trying to discard the old association with the inferior apothecaries. Parallel to this development, some contemporaries started to question the relevance of the distinction among medical practitioners and the connection of liberal education with the medical profession. They mocked the physicians' university education as irrelevant to medical practice. The practical experience of the apothecaries and surgeons were cherished and contrasted to the useless speculative knowledge of the physicians. Speaking of apothecaries, a contemporary wrote, 'His opportunities of acquiring *practical* information are assuredly very superior to those of the physicians of the English universities.'[374] Another writer observed that, 'no man can acquire a sufficient knowledge of his profession at Oxford or Cambridge; it is only to be acquired by hard fagging in hospitals and dissecting rooms.'[375]

Some observers started to feel that a 'higher class of medical talent and skill is now trained in … the subordinate walks of the profession.' In other words, although in terms of rank the physician was higher than the others, 'his experience and knowledge would place him below the practitioner with an inferior title.'[376] Critics also lambasted what was seen as the monopoly of Oxford and Cambridge in

[372] 'Pure Physicians', *Lancet*, 1:223 (December 8, 1827), 415.
[373] 'Meeting of Surgeons and Apothecaries', *Morning Chronicle*, Monday, February 27 1826.
[374] 'An Apothecary versus A Physician', *Monthly Gazette of Health* (London, 1820), 215.
[375] 'Physic and Physicians in 1831', *Englishman's Magazine* (July, 1831), 425-426.
[376] 'Medical Education in London', *The Times*, Wednesday May 17, 1826, 3.

producing the useless gentry of medical practice. It is ridiculous, one critic wrote, 'to suppose … that some 40 of 50 men of the *non*-medical universities of Oxford and Cambridge shall be allowed to constitute themselves the medical aristocracy of the country, and to lord it over all other physicians.'[377] The increasing resentment of the hierarchical medical structure was reinforced by the rise of a new approach to disease known by historians as the 'anatomico-clinical method', 'hospital medicine' or 'analytical medicine'. Originally a French enterprise, this approach emphasised the abstract and universal dimensions of bodily health, thus replacing the old focus on the concrete individual and historical situation of patients.[378]

The rise of this approach led to a greater emphasis on pure medical subjects including anatomy and physiology which, according to one observer, 'are better conducted under … self-appointed lecturers, than at either of the English Universities.'[379] The advent of scientific subjects blurred the old distinction between physic and surgery. Some surgeons began to insist that 'surgery and physic considered as objects of scientific investigation, are one and indivisible.'[380] The title 'Doctor' then became a contested subject, as surgeons thought that they were also entitled to use it, but physicians who stood 'out for "exclusive" and "ancient privileges" are not disposed to accede it to them'.[381] Interestingly, the reaction of the ancient medical establishment towards reform tended to shape the battle along the sharp dividing line between defenders of the hierarchy and their opponents. For instance, the Royal College of Physicians answered those who tried to 'lower us in the public eye' by boasting about the attendance of aristocrats like the Duke of

[377] 'College of Physicians', *Lancet*, 7:172 (16 December 1826), 359
[378] Burney, 'Medicine in the Age of Reform', 163.
[379] 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, Monday June 2, 1828, 5.
[380] 'Mr Lawrence's Lecture', *Lancet*, 1:318 (October 3, 1829-30), 36.
[381] 'The Physicians and the Surgeons of London', *Morning Chronicle*, Monday, December 30, 1833..

Wellington and the Earl of Westmorland at their meetings, which, they claimed, showed how the institution was highly 'appreciated by men of the highest rank, and holding the most prominent stations in the country.'[382]

In relation to the previous discussions, we can see that there is an interesting parallel between the cause of middle-class university education and that of the general practitioners. As the middle classes started to assert their significance as a social group, general practitioners also began to rise in eminence. Both middle-class tradesmen and rank-and-file practitioners were long deprived of education at Oxford and Cambridge, and they were looked down upon by the upper classes and the physicians respectively. There was also a striking parallel between an aspect of the medical reform movement and the challenge of political economy to the old idea of gentlemanly benevolence in the early nineteenth century. As Brown suggests, in this period, some reformers of medical practice started to criticise the eighteenth-century tradition of medical charities, viewing the governors of charitable organisations as part of the wider machinery of the old corruption. A good medical practice therefore became increasingly seen as solely characterised by the 'possession and application of rational, expert knowledge' rather than 'the social performance of genteel benevolence'.[383] Patients, for instance, were no longer treated as 'the recipients of paternalistic charity but as objects of medical knowledge.'[384] It is no coincidence that among the figures noted by Brown that represented this shift in attitudes were members of the London University including council member George Birkbeck and the radical medical professor, John Elliotson.

[382] "College of Physicians", *London Medical Gazette* 5 (London, 1830), 628-629.
[383] Michael Brown, 'Medicine, Reform and the "End" of Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *English Historical Review,* 124: 511 (2009), 1357.
[384] Ibid., 1368.

The 1820s was a crucial moment in the history of medical reform in England. The decade witnessed the publication of several medical journals that intensified this radical call for change. The most influential was *The Lancet*. It was founded in 1823 by Thomas Wakley, a William Cobbett of the medical world, and soon launched a formidable literary offensive against the medical establishment. Through its discourse, the critique of the medical regime became a wider socio-political critique of the old-corruption. Later, in 1827, those who opposed Wakley's radicalism reacted by publishing the *London Medical Gazette*.[385] It was in this heated period that the London University and its medical school were founded. Before discussing in detail the contribution of the medical programme in challenging the place of liberal education in the medical world, it is helpful to examine the relationship between the London University and the medical reform community in general.

The London University and Medical Reform

Some council members, including Birkbeck and Joseph Hume, were medical practitioners. As most of them were graduates of the University of Edinburgh, they had bitter first-hand experience of the exclusive culture of the English medical profession. It was therefore natural for them to become proponents of medical reform. In a parliamentary debate, for instance, Hume expressed his dissatisfaction with the existing system that denied the right for a qualified surgeon like him to dispense medicine, and he also thought that 'with respect to medical science, this country was in a state of barbarism as compared with France.'[386] However, among the council members, Birkbeck was the most instrumental in the formation of the

[385] Burney, 'Medicine in the Age of Reform', 163-165.
[386] HC Deb 11 February 1834, vol. 21, col 236.

medical school. This can be seen from the fact that he was often consulted by others on the subject of the medical curriculum, and his opinions on candidates for its professorships were highly valued.[387] The central role played by Birkbeck in the establishment of the school suggests that from the very beginning the process was in the hands of those who were sympathetic to the reform movement.

The list of the first medical professors appointed by the university also reflects the leaning of the school towards reform. For instance, Anthony Todd Thomson who acquired the chair of *Materia Medica* and pharmacy was a well-known reformer who had played an important role in the passing of the Apothecaries Act of 1815. He was also known as someone who adamantly affirmed his professional identity as a general practitioner, and detested the old label 'apothecary' as it implied an inferior status to that of physicians.[388] It is therefore unsurprising that in speeches and lectures delivered at the medical school, we can find clear allusions to the cause of reform. For instance, in an opening speech to his medical students, Robert Grant told his audience 'to congratulate themselves on the light of reform and improvement which begins to dawn on the profession they are about to enter.'[389]

Some of the professors' lectures and speeches featured explicit attacks on the ancient medical establishments including the Royal College of Physicians. Grant, for instance, complained that no medical degree could make a physician eligible for the fellowship of that College, unless it was from 'the imperfect medical schools of Oxford and Cambridge.'[390] A fellow of the Royal College of Physicians reacted to

[387] University College London, Miscellaneous Committee Minutes 1826-1827. 'Education Committee, 20th December 1827'.
[388] David Innes Williams, 'Anthony Todd Thomson and the Rise of the General Practitioner', *Journal of Medical Biography*, 10 (2002), 206.
[389] 'University of London: Address on the Study of Medicine … By Professor Grant', *Lancet*, 1:527 (October 5, 1833), 42.
[390] Ibid., 42.

this charge by stressing that 'Dr. Grant has no right … to inflame the mind of his pupils with an assertion that' the exclusive power of the Royal College of Physicians was oppressive and injurious to the profession.[391] He objected to Grant's suggestion that the ancient universities were 'imperfect medical schools', and claimed that the exclusive right of their graduates to the fellowship was justified on the grounds that they had 'the best general education'. Such a liberal education, he maintained, was indispensable for medical students in order 'to secure an order of practitioners, educated in the same manner and in the same classes as the highest rank of society'.[392]

The relationship between the university and reformers can also be grasped from commentaries in contemporary medical journals. Initially, the reformist medical journal *The Lancet* did have some reservations about the medical programme and the commitment of the university to reform.[393] However, by 1830 the journal started to see the institution as an asset to the medical world in general. 'Few institutions of modern times' it claimed 'have so strongly excited the hopes of the literati of Europe as the University of London.'[394] They remained critical of some members of the medical school, but were largely positive about the institution itself. Indeed, it criticised the lecture delivered by John Conolly at the medical school, for being incompatible with the ethos of the university. Describing itself as the promoter of 'the prosperity of the medical school' and 'well-wishers to that establishment', *The Lancet* hoped that such a lecture 'may never be repeated within the walls of the London University'. The writer expected, indeed, that such a bad speech had surely

[391] A Fellow of the College of Physicians, 'Dr.Grant and the College of Physicians', *London Medical Gazette*, 1 (London, 1833-34), 119.
[392]Ibid., 120.
[393] 'London University', *Lancet,* 2:257 (August 2, 1828), 561; Historians, Holloway and Singer are aware that Wakely, the editor, 'sometimes took a poor view of the University varieties of purity.' Singer and Holloway, 'Medical Education in England', 15.
[394] 'London University', *Lancet,* 1:371 (October 9, 1830), 79.

'excited the strongest feelings of dissatisfaction among his colleagues generally, and among many of the most influential members of the Council'.[395]

Contemporary awareness of the university's support for reform may also be discerned from the way it was treated in the relatively conservative medical journal, *London Medical Gazette* (hereafter the *Gazette*). In contrast to *The Lancet*, the initial treatment in the *Gazette* was quite positive. It was relatively at ease with what it saw as the moderate position of the university towards reform. Unlike the radical approach promoted by *The Lancet*, it was observed that 'the arrangement in this university leads to reformation by degrees, gently, and without offence.'[396] A few years later, this perception started to change, as it began to detect the radical leanings of some elements in the medical school. The critical attitude of the *Gazette* towards the institution is evident from its later refusal to address it as a university; it referred to it instead as 'the Gower-Street School'. Especially after 1830, it began to criticise certain lectures and speeches at the medical school, as it began to attack the university more generally. It is true that *The Lancet* also occasionally criticised the school, but that was only when they saw it deviating from the course of reform. In the case of the *Gazette*, on the other hand, most critiques were driven by an eagerness to defend aspects of the medical establishment.

Among of the main vices of the university, in the eyes of the *Gazette*, were conceitedness and an exaggerated sense of its own importance. The 'Gower-Street School', it was maintained, 'became degraded by having recourse to self-trumpetings and the publication of the vainest pretensions'. For the *Gazette*, the

[395] 'London University', *Lancet*, 1:267 (October 11, 1828), 50-52.
[396] 'Mr. Bell's Introductory Lecture', *London Medical Gazette*, 5 (London, 1830), 19.

ambience of the university itself 'is evidently favourable to boasting.' [397] Most of the lectures and speeches given by the medical professors of the university allegedly reflected this arrogance. This was contrasted to what was seen as the humility of the medical school at King's College London: 'The King's College medical school stands acquitted of putting forth any gasconading pretensions … they certainly deal much less in the article of self-commendation and vaunting assurance than their Gower street competitors.'[398] The *Gazette* was also highly critical of the disposition of the medical school towards the radical causes of *The Lancet*. For instance, it called Grant 'a very wrong-headed man', because the professor introduced Wakley, the editor of *The Lancet*, 'to his class' and praised him as the 'castigator of the evil doer' and 'rewarder of the good.'[399] Therefore it is clear that in general there was a strong relationship between the world of medical reform and the foundation of the London University. However, as we are interested in a specific aspect of reform, namely, its impact on liberal education, the remaining part of this chapter is devoted to the role of the medical school in challenging the influence of the traditional ethos on the medical profession. In the next part we shall see the first aspect of the challenge of the medical school as reflected in its treatment of classical learning.

The Medical School and Classics

Medical reformers really took issue with what they saw as the unjustified privilege granted to the dead languages: 'To suppose that there is something in the nature of Latin which renders it essentially necessary to the students of medicine, is perfectly

[397] 'Opening of the Medical Session', *London Medical Gazette*, 1 (London, 1833-34), 22.
[398] Ibid.
[399] 'Dr. Grant on the Use of "Low Epithets"', *London Medical Gazette*, 1 (London, 1833-34), 676

ridiculous.'[400] However, this does not mean that classics had no place at all in the discourse of medical education at the London University. For several reasons, many reformers and promoters of scientific education still encouraged the learning of the classical languages. Indeed, it is not difficult to find medical members and supporters of the London University talking about the importance of classics. Thompson, for example, maintained that 'as medicine is a profession which elevates its followers to the rank of gentlemen, the student who is desirous of attaining eminence, should possess that portion of classical learning which every gentleman is presumed to have required.'[401] Likewise, in his introductory lecture, Conolly, the professor of the nature and treatment of disease, encouraged his students to learn Greek and Latin.[402] While in an address to medical students Grant maintained that by learning Latin a pupil 'is acquiring the language in which half the works of his future profession are written … [and] the language from which the technical terms of anatomy, surgery and the half medical science, are derived.'[403] However, despite these allusions to the relevance of a classical education for medical students, such commentators actually differed from traditional medical discourse in their understanding of the significance of the subject.

Here, the significance of classics was primarily understood in terms of its practical relevance to the medical profession, rather than in forming a gentlemanly character. Latin was important, for instance, because the terms used in many medical subjects originated from that language. Therefore, to be a well-informed practitioner one had no choice but to learn it. Contrary to the spirit of traditional liberal education also,

[400] Neville Wood, 'On the Study of Latin, More Especially as Regards the Medical Profession', *Analyst*, 3:13 (October, 1835), 49.
[401] Medicus, *Thoughts on Medical Education and a Plan for Its Improvement Addressed to the Council of the University of London* (London, 1826), 12.
[402] John Conolly, *An Introductory Lecture Delivered in the University of London*, 2nd edition (London, 1828), 28.
[403] 'University of London: Address on the Study of Medicine … By Professor Grant', 42.

the medical professors and supporters of the London University did not accord the classical languages a higher status than the modern ones. Grant, for instance, made it clear that although classical languages were valuable 'the useful knowledge to be obtained through their means, falls infinitely short of that to which he can obtain access only by an acquaintance with the modern languages of Europe, particularly the French and German.'[404] For him and Conolly, however, English was the most important language as it was used 'in the various writings and correspondence of an active professional life.'[405] Students who failed to master it properly would tarnish the image of a liberal profession.[406] Furthermore, if the attainment of classics was traditionally associated with the assumption that book learning and literary attainment was the stock and trade of a gentleman-physician, advice contrary to this spirit was given to the medical students at the new university: 'read little, observe carefully, and think much.'[407]

To appreciate how the place accorded to classics at the medical school was much lower than the one maintained by traditional liberal education, one just needs to compare it with the classically driven practices at the Royal College of Physicians. For instance, to be appointed as a fellow of the College, a candidate had to undergo a three-day series of oral examinations in which he would be 'questioned in Latin, on Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Therapeutics, and all other branches of medical science, and thrice is he obliged to display his knowledge of Greek literature by reading publicly and extemporaneously difficult passages of Aretæus, or some other medical classic.'[408] This practice was in agreement with the medical

[404] Ibid., 43.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Conolly, *Introductory Lecture*, 28.
[407] Ibid., 31.
[408] 'Observations on Medical Reform', *Pamphleteer*, 3:6 (1814), 416.

education at the ancient universities where medical students were required to answer medical questions in Latin.[409] Furthermore, official addresses and speeches at the College were delivered in Latin. When Henry Halford, the President, delivered his oration in that language, a critic pointed out that this practice 'has been abandoned by the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of all nations of Europe, even by those of Catholic countries' while 'the state of medicine at the English Universities, or the College of Medicine of London, still requires this cloak!!' Such a disposition puzzled him as he found nothing in the oration 'that might not have appeared in the English language.'[410] It is therefore clear that, unlike the ancient institutions, the medical school of the London University treated classics as something that was not essential to the medical profession.

At the new institution, this attitude towards classics was reinforced by the tendency to frame the importance of medical education in terms of modern versus ancient. Thompson, for instance, believed that the enlightened character of the foundation would free the university from the negative aspects of the medical teaching at Oxford and Cambridge, namely, 'a weak adherence to antiquity'. Those universities lacked 'proper models for modern education; and in no branch of study is this so evident as in that of medicine.'[411] In one lecture, Charles Bell told his medical students that although the moderns could hardly match the ancients 'in the works of imagination', this was not really the case in 'physical science'. In this area of study 'the course of discovery is progressive and expanding, and the facts discovered daily are more and more interesting and important.' As a result of this, while the students

[409] 'Pernicious Effects of the System of Education Pursued in Our Great Universities', *Oriental Herald,* 6:21 (September 1825), 504
[410] 'Charge of Scepticism against the Medical Profession', Monthly Gazette of Health, 10 (1825), 376-377.
[411] Medicus, *Thoughts on Medical Education*, 2.

of classics 'are more amenable to authority' and preferred to 'look back on ancient times as being worthy of all admiration', a student of physical science, on the other hand, 'is conscious that he knows a great deal more than the most ingenious or inquisitive of those who lived a hundred years before him, and considers them as having lived in the childhood of the world.'[412] He further boasted that for 'our students, books are no longer talismans and spells, they have no respect for antiquity, and names have no authority with them.'[413] One can clearly see here how the emphasis on medicine as part of the physical sciences made its differences from the ancient more apparent. We shall, in the next part, discuss how the characterisation of the medical profession, mainly in terms of medical science, constituted a further challenge to liberal education.

Medical Science and Medical Hierarchy

Among the rank-and-file practitioners, the assumption that the medical profession was a scientific rather than an artisanal enterprise was evident since the late eighteenth century. For instance the famous English surgeon, John Hunter, had urged surgeons to regard themselves as 'scientific professionals instead of merely as craftsmen.'[414] However, the pervasiveness of the old system of apprenticeship had greatly impeded this effort.[415] The establishment of the London University in the 1820s clearly added a new impetus to this struggle. In their celebration of the

[412] 'London University', *Lancet*, 1:266 (October 4, 1828), 9.
[413] Ibid., 9.
[414] W.F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), 5
[415] For a general account on the relationship between medical profession and apprenticeship in the eighteenth century see Joan Lane, 'The Role of Apprenticeship in Eighteenth-Century Medical Education in England', in W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter (eds.), *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World* (Cambridge, 1985), 57-104; for a historical survey of British apprenticeship system see K.D.M Snell, 'The Apprenticeship System in British History: the Fragmentation of a Cultural Institution', *History of Education*, 25:4 (1996), 303 - 321.

establishment of the medical school, contemporaries portrayed it as a symbol for the progression of medical science. One observer, for instance, saw '[t]he opening of the London University' as a source 'of hope for rapid advancement of medical science and growing improvement of surgical and medical practice.'[416] In an essay published before his appointment at the school, Anthony Todd Thomson expressed his conviction that the most important object of the London University was 'the promotion of the study of medicine'.[417] For him, 'as far as medicine is concerned' the establishment 'is likely to form a proud and memorable era in the history of that science.'[418]

The significance of this celebration can be further appreciated if we relate it to the fact that the medical programme at the institution was mainly intended for general practitioners. Although this group of practitioners were rising in eminence in the period as a result of reform measures, including the Apothecaries Act of 1815, university education was still not part of their training. The only means for them to enter the trade was via apprenticeship and informal learning at several private institutions and hospitals around the metropolis. The founders of the London University noted in their prospectus that hitherto many general practitioners 'receive their systematic instruction from lecturers in London, for one or two years, while many of them attend hospitals.' The problem, however, was that these institutions were so spread out, which meant that medical education in the metropolis suffered from a lack of coordination and uniformity. It was therefore hoped that through the foundation of the institution, lecturers and students 'who are now scattered over London, were gradually attracted to one Institution, where they would be stimulated

[416] *The Times*, Monday, November 3, 1828, 2.
[417] Medicus, *Thoughts on Medical Education*, 1.
[418] Ibid., 50.

to the utmost exertion of their faculties, by closer rivalship, larger emolument, and wider reputation.'[419]

Before 1835, the medical members of the university continuously fought for the right to grant medical degrees primarily because it would encourage general practitioners to attend 'a more extended course of study as the science they profess and as the public interest require.'[420] The granting of degrees, in other words, would further 'promote medical knowledge by holding out an inducement to the study of medicine as a science, and not merely as a practical profession.'[421] The characterisation of medicine as a scientific field posed a challenge to the role of liberal education in sustaining the hierarchical distinction among medical practitioners. This challenge was on two fronts. First, it weakened the relevance of the old practice of apprenticeship among rank-and-file practitioners which was instrumental in sustaining the liberal/illiberal and gentleman/tradesman divides in the profession. As explained earlier, it was due to their apprenticeship that some practitioners were treated as inferior to those physicians who received liberal education. By stressing the importance of medical science, the medical school encouraged lower-class practitioners to undergo formal medical education rather than apprenticeship.

In order to promote the character of medicine as a science, therefore, the nature of medical education at the London University was designed in such a manner that would allow apprentices to attend:

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[419] *University of London: Prospectus*, 2.
[420] University College London, Medical Faculty Papers, 'University of London Medical Classes. 1830-1831', 8.
[421] *University of London: address from the Senate to the Council in Support of the University for a Charter* (London, 1834), 12.

> there are many young men articled to apothecaries and surgeons, especially those who come from the country, who are obliged to compress their medical education in London within a shorter period. They will have the power of entering as occasional students, and of attending such Lectures as are best suited to their object.[422]

Speaking of general practitioners, Thomson deplored the 'custom of serving apprenticeships' as for him an early exposure to practice at the expense of scientific education rendered students of medicine unable to think systematically. On the subject of drugs, for example, an apprentice's mind is usually 'filled with confused ideas of the effects of drugs, without any knowledge of the principles which should always direct their application.' Even if later he decided to take some medical courses, it would already be too late to give him the desired mental habit. Finally, as his mind was not attuned to the knowledge of principles, 'he becomes a mere routine practitioner, or a trader in specifics.'[423]

This dislike of apprenticeship was not uncommon among the contemporary proponents of medical reform, whose concern was to elevate the status of general practitioners. For some, who still clung to the importance of gentlemanly comportment in relation to one's status, apprenticeship was detestable because it degraded the character by generating 'feelings of humbleness and servility.'[424] One observer was of the opinion that '[s]o long as apothecaries continue to receive apprentices on the present plan, so long their branch of medical practice will be a trade only – not a profession.' Some were even 'employed in sweeping the room, lighting the fire, and cleaning his master's boots!' In other words, 'the apothecary's apprentice is not always in the situation of a gentleman, a circumstance which never

[422] *Statement by the* Council …, 20.
[423] Medicus, *Thoughts on Medical Education*, 3-4.
[424] W.S.K., 'Reflections on Medical Education', *Newcastle Magazine, 3:3* (March, 1824), 123.

ought to be tolerated in a profession like ours.'[425] Others, like Thompson, disapproved of apprenticeship mainly because it prevented prospective practitioners from acquiring the relevant scientific education, thus hindering them from becoming competent in their field. On this point, another critic observed that five years spent on apprenticeship alone as too long; rather it 'might be effectually acquired in one, or at most two years; while two years, or often one year, could be allotted to the study of physiology, pathology, and all the more connected, profound, and important sciences.'[426]

In reaction to this new development, some defenders of the old practice continued to stress that it was apprenticeship, rather than education, that suited the lower-class practitioners. Any attempt to supply them with scientific knowledge would disrupt the existing hierarchy of the medical world in particular and society in general. For instance, in a discussion on the state of medical education held at Guy's Hospital, it was reported that 'some Physicians, of the old school, with powdered heads, &c., somewhat amused the younger members, by foreboding the mischief which would arise from the apothecary having too extensive a knowledge of his art.'[427] The council member, Birkbeck, who participated in the debate, denounced such a view as merely serving the interest of the upper classes. On the need to educate the apothecaries he asked, was not the life of the poor as valuable as the life of 'those individuals, whose condition in society may enable them to command the attendance of physician or surgeon? Why, therefore, ought not the same talent and

[425] 'Regulations of the Apothecaries', *London Medical Gazette*, 1 (London, 1828), 59.
[426] 'Medical Education in the Metropolis', *Morning Chronicle*, Friday October 19, 1827.
[427] Ibid.

skill to be exercised in their behalf, as in behalf of the wealthy [considerable applause]?'[428]

This encouragement for the general practitioners to take up scientific education and abandon apprenticeship was also partly driven by the wider movement that promoted the diffusion of knowledge. It was clear to Thompson, for instance, that the opportunity that the London University had to improve 'greatly the system of education of young men designed for the Medical Profession' owed much to the 'progressive march of knowledge.'[429] Hence, we can see that those who were against the extension of medical education actually represented the same camp as the enemies of popular education that we met with in the last chapter. One opponent, for instance, argued that the call for the diffusion of knowledge 'tended to increase the supply of medical men, till it begins to exceed the demand'. He then stressed that 'the diffusion of knowledge generally, and the cultivation of a particular profession, are two very different things' and 'if the facilities to entering the medical profession be farther increased, they will tend to lower its respectability'.[430] Therefore, like the enemies of popular education, those who opposed the diffusion of medical education were concerned with what they saw as the encroachment of the vulgar upon the privileges of few elite.

However, a more powerful challenge to hierarchical distinction in the profession came from the emphasis on the uniform or indivisible character of medical science. First, this emphasis dissolved the old division between physic and surgery, thus rendering irrelevant the distinction between physicians and other practitioners. As

[428] Ibid.
[429] Medicus, *Thoughts on Medical Education*, 1.
[430] 'Medical Education and Professional Grades', *London Medical Gazette*, 13 (London, 1834), 133-134.

one contemporary wrote, the aim of 'the entire range of medical science … is single; the qualification for the practice of it the same; and the education necessary to give that qualification identical; there is therefore no rational foundation for any diversity of rank.'[431] For him the distinction of ranks was incomprehensible since 'Disease is not aristocratic and plebeian; not to be cured in the gorgeous apartments of the noble and the rich by a refined, elaborate, and recondite skill, inapplicable to the chambers of the ignoble and the poor.'[432] In line with this spirit, members of the medical school, such as Thompson, urged all practitioners to attain the same medical instruction.[433]

The universal character of medical science generated a strong assumption that all medical practitioners needed to be evaluated, based on their merit, defined in terms of scientific knowledge. For Thompson, even if the distinction between physician, surgeon and apothecary was to be retained, it should be based on the difference in 'ingenuity, judgment, and the powers of intellect' rather than on 'fortune, family connexions, and patronage.'[434] Grant asserted that without the proper teaching of science as offered by the university, all extrinsic 'privileges and dignities are absurd vanities, calculated to benefit only a few individuals, who may be protected by such privileges'. He then assured his audience that at this university 'no invidious distinctions have yet sown the seeds of dissension, or damped the ardour of the teacher.'[435] Even if 'privileges are to be granted to this school … they will be

[431] D.S., 'Medical Reform', *London and Westminster Review*, 4:1 (October, 1836), 66.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Medicus, *Thoughts on Medical Education*, 6.
[434] Ibid., 6-7.
[435] 'University of London: Address on the Study of Medicine … By Professor Grant', 48.

founded … on a full and candid examination of its comparative and intrinsic merits, and on the broad principles of reason, expediency, and public good.'[436]

We can glean how the call for the unity of medical science was subversive to hierarchical distinction just by looking at the politically charged slogan commonly used by reformers – 'one and indivisible'. This phrase, during this period, was closely associated with the French Revolution and French Republic. The French constitution of 1793 affirmed that 'The French Republic is one and indivisible' (La République française est une et indivisible). A medical author, for instance, quoted what he believed as the saying of the well-known French scientist Comte de Fourcroy: 'Medicine and Surgery are one and indivisible as the Republic.'[437] Furthermore, it was reported that the influential English surgeon John Abernethy had called for unity between physic and surgery in the same language:

> medicine is what the French Republic was said to be, – one and indivisible. A knowledge of both medicine and surgery is necessary for every medical man, and the physician, surgeon, or apothecary, who dares to practice without this comprehensive knowledge, is trifling with human life, and is dangerous to society.[438]

In the eyes of the defenders of the establishment this was the subversive language of medical levellers. One author ridiculed the fact that the use of the language was inspired by the formation of the French Republic: 'they forget to state whether the 'one and indivisible' republic of France was itself able to carry its political theory of reform to such an extent in practice.'[439] Another critic complained that '[w]e have heard it repeated *ad nauseam*, that the healing art is "one and indivisible." Granted: it is a theoretical truth, and practical fallacy'. Why the call for unity was fallacious in the eyes of these medical conservatives is because, for them, the socio-political

[436] Ibid., 42.
[437] 'Medical Reform', *Satirist*, Sunday May 19, 1833, 26.
[438] 'Medical Reform', *Liverpool Mercury*, Friday January 10, 1834.
[439] 'Pranks of Certain Radical Orators', *London Medical Gazette*, 13 (London, 1834), 645.

and the medical were indissoluble. Basically, they were still preoccupied with the need to distinguish physicians from other practitioners by emphasising the character of their education as 'the most enlarged' and which provided them with the 'general attainments required of English gentlemen.'[440] The influence of French politics and French medicine, therefore, encouraged the practitioners to acknowledge no gradation of status among them. In the next part we shall discuss the presence of this influence on the medical school and see how it reflected an institutional atmosphere that was unconducive to the acknowledgment of status hierarchy.

Medical School and Radicalism

Basically, the recognition of the hierarchical order in the profession and the respect for higher-rank practitioners were deeply related to the way in which prospective practitioners were nurtured in their respective educational institutions. As we saw earlier, students in the ancient universities were graded into ranks. This meant that long before the medical students at the two universities were initiated into the profession, they were used to thinking of and experiencing their life-practices in terms of status hierarchy, that is, in a way that confirmed to the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal. It is argued here that the institutional atmosphere of the medical school at the London University, on the other hand, was more egalitarian and at times radical, thus discouraging the acknowledgement of a medical hierarchy and authority external to medical science. This condition was partly attributable to the obsession among the members of the school with anything French. For instance, they frequently turned to French medical practice as a guide when there were

[440] 'Medical Education and Professional Grades', 133.

problems in academic or structural matters. When there was a dispute between Granville Sharp Pattison, the Professor of Anatomy and his demonstrator, James Henry Bennett, over the division of their tasks, the former asked his colleagues Dionysius Lardner and Augustus de Morgan to obtain 'some particulars respecting similar offices in France.'[441] However, this reverence for French practice also shaped the attitudes of the students towards the institution. This was partly reinforced by the policy of the university that restricted the idea of authority to that of classroom discipline. Not only that there was no ranking among students, the authority of the professors over them was not clearly defined. In this kind of atmosphere, members were encouraged to make sense of their relations not in terms of hierarchical ranks, but in terms of a conglomeration of interests.

The revolutionary and republican zeal became most apparent in the behaviour of the medical students during what was known as the Pattison affair. Basically, the situation that took place between 1829 and 1831 arose when charges were made by some medical students against the alleged incompetency of Pattison in teaching anatomy. This crisis had divided not only the medical school but the university itself into two camps: pro-Pattison and pro-students. The students claimed that they were protesting in the name of science. Their leader, Nathaniel Eisdell, stressed that the charge had to be made because he believed that 'it was the intention and desire of the noble proprietary of this institution to raise the science of anatomy from the low ebb in which it now is in this country.'[442] One instrumental figure in the revolt was the son of Anthony Todd Thomson, Alexander Thomson. When the council banned the younger Thomson from entering the University in order to prevent him from

[441] Senate House Library, MS. 322/21, Dionysius Lardner to Augustus De Morgan, September 11, 1829.
[442] University College London, Pattison Case Papers, Mr. Eisdell to Leonard Horner, 30 April 1830.

inciting other students against Pattison, his followers 'distributed their propaganda to other students with tri-coloured papers inscribed "Thomson and Liberty".'[443] As this took place in 1830, the use of the tri-coloured paper was certainly not insignificant. It shows how the rebellious mood of the students was partly charged by the July Revolution that had recently taken place in France which had led to the abdication of Charles X. The tri-colour featured greatly in English accounts of the event: 'where it was easily accessible the royal ensign was displaced, and the tri-colour substituted.'[444] At that time, those who were sympathetic to the Republic reminded their English readers of the egalitarian spirit behind the origin of the tri-colour. It was claimed that during the first Revolution the Royal colour, white, was added to the colour of Paris, red and blue, 'indicating that the King was no longer a separate estate, and that his power had passed into the hands of the people.'[445] On the other hand, Tory newspapers such as *John Bull* were quick to use the symbol in satirising their political opponents. Hence, just a month after the Whigs formed their government, *John Bull* published a satirical piece entitled 'The Tri-Color Ministry.'[446]

Therefore, the practice of using the tri-coloured paper by the supporters of the young Thomson and the slogan 'Thomson and Liberty' reflected both the attitude of the medical students and the spirit of the university that recognised no gradation of ranks and authority. By dismissing Pattison in 1831, it was clear that the council had sided with the students, they were apparently indifferent to their rebellious behaviour. In fact, the leader of the protest, Eisdell, became the president of the

[443] Granville S. Pattison, *Professor Pattison's Statement of the Facts of His Connexion with the University of London* (London, 1831), 18.
[444] 'Progress of the French Revolution', *Sheffield Independent*, Saturday August 07, 1830.
[445] 'London, Aug 24', *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, Saturday, August 28, 1830.
[446] Lord Howick, 'The Tri-Color Ministry', *John Bull*, Monday, December 20, 1830, 405.

medical students and celebrated 'as a distinguished student of the institution.'[447] Several professors, including Lardner and De Morgan, resigned in support of Pattison. Looking at how the professor was poorly treated at the new university, De Morgan, in his letter to the council lamented that 'The clergyman, the lawyer, the physician, the tutor or Professor in the ancient Universities, will all look down upon him, for they are all secured in the possession of their characters.'[448]

Again, one just needs to compare this incident with similar cases at Oxford and Cambridge to understand how it reflected a new radical attitude in regards to hierarchy and authority in the practice of English university education. It is certainly naïve to assume that the students of the ancient universities were always obedient and orderly. In this period, as before, there were riots and protests among students at some Oxford and Cambridge colleges. However, it is a testament to how far status hierarchy and reverence towards authority continued to constitute the fabric of their collegiate life, that Oxford and Cambridge were able not only to supress such disorderly situations but to make them appear contrary to their ethos. For instance, in 1831, 53 undergraduates at Trinity College, Oxford, sent a petition to their president protesting against certain regulations and disciplinary measures; but, instead of sympathising with them, the fellows of the college admonished such behaviour as an act of disobedience to Authority', and one student was sternly reminded that 'you are not here as a free citizen of England, but in *statu pupilarri*.'[449] It is clear then, through some of its institutional and discursive elements that were hostile to or incompatible with the notion of status hierarchy in the medical profession, the medical school of the London University posed a

[447] 'Students' Dinner', *Lancet*, 17:444 (March 3, 1832), 812.
[448] Sophia Elizabeth de Morgan, *Memoir of Augustus de Morgan* (London, 1882), 35.
[449]Cited in M.C. Curthoys, 'The "Unreformed" Colleges', in M.G Brock and M.C Curthoys (eds.) *The History of the University of Oxford* , 8 vols. (Oxford, 1997), vi. 155.

considerable challenge to the socio-cultural dominance of liberal education. However, there is another significant challenge that the school presented to the traditional educational ethos, namely, in the form of a new conception of the ideal medical practitioner. The remaining part of this chapter is therefore devoted to discussing this challenge.

The Language of Theory and Practice

Thompson insisted that the medical courses at the institution should lead to 'the formation of efficient medical practitioners.'[450] Later, when writing testimonies in support of his students, he would sometimes describe them as being 'well calculated to become a useful and efficient practitioner.'[451] It could be argued that, in the discourse of medical education at the university, the image of an ideal medical practitioner was encapsulated in this notion of the efficient practitioner, an image that differed significantly from the persona of the liberally educated gentleman-physician. What defined an efficient practitioner was his ability to mediate between theory and practice. Therefore, we shall examine in detail how this defining characteristic represented a decisive cultural challenge to the gentlemanly character sustained by traditional liberal education. First, it is necessary to explain how the approach to the question of theory and practice adopted here is different from previous historical studies.

The main characteristic of the existing approach is that it attempts to identify the ideological and intellectual orientation of historical actors in terms of whether or not they were in the camp of theory or practice, while leaving untouched the question of

[450] Medicus, 1.
[451] Wellcome Library, MS 7715/8, Anthony Todd Thomson to University College, June 7, 1843.

how far the use of the distinction itself in a specific historical period might represent a particular ideological and cultural position. For instance, in his study of late eighteenth and early-nineteenth century political culture, David Simpson uses this distinction to highlight English anti-theoretical attitudes, marked by their hostility to 'hypotheses, schemas, and prescriptive constitutions,' which was present across a wide political spectrum from Burke's conservatism to Cobbett's radicalism.[452] In the historiography of medicine, R.S Roberts employs this distinction in his characterisation of the traditional difference between physicians and surgeons, defined in terms of the 'theoretical knowledge' of the former and 'practical instruction' of the latter. He then suggests that the emergence of clinical medicine in the early nineteenth century, that promoted the application of scientific theories, helped to close the gap.[453]

This approach, however, is inadequate to the task of unravelling the question of theory and practice underlying the notion of an efficient practitioner. Instead of evaluating medical practitioners in terms of theory and practice, it is more fruitful to look at the contemporary emphasis on the relationship between theory and practice as a culturally and ideologically significant phenomenon. In other words, what matters here is not who sided with theory or practice, but rather how the very concern with the relationship between theory and practice itself marked a cultural shift in the understanding of the evolution of the medical profession. This concern was manifested in what we refer to as the language of theory and practice. This language constituted a challenge to the dominance of liberal education in the medical profession as it undermined the understanding of practice that sustained the

[452] David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory* (Chicago, 1993), 52.
[453] R.S. Roberts, 'Medical Education and the Medical Corporations', in F.N.L Poynter (ed.) *The Evolution of Medical Education in Britain* (London, 1966), 69.

notion of the gentleman-physician. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the discourse of practice that maintained the idea of a gentleman-physician corresponded to Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*. The one that sustained the image of an efficient practitioner, however, corresponded to the notion of *techne*. As observed earlier, in *phronesis*, the quality of one's character was integral to the definition of good practice or action, while in *techne* such issues were irrelevant.

However, the tension between the image of a gentleman-physician and the new ideal of an efficient practitioner cannot be appreciated unless we understand the difference between *phronesis* and *techne* in regards to the relationship between theory and practice. *Phronesis* differed from *techne* in the sense that it had no relation to theory. Right and wrong action in *phronesis* was contingent upon a concrete situation, experience and context, and could not be determined prior to that.[454] On the other hand, there is a striking similarity between a man of *techne* and a theorist, which lies in the fact that they both take a third person or detached viewpoint on the subject that they are dealing with. As the personal character and life-situation of a theorist were irrelevant in determining the validity of his mathematical demonstration, those of the craftsman also were irrelevant to ensuring the practical utility of his product. Besides, performance in *techne* was also open to guidance or improvement from knowledge of theoretical principles. For instance, the art of sword making can benefit from theoretical knowledge derived from, say, chemistry and natural philosophy. Hence, as it had no bearing on the question of character and gentlemanliness, and because at the same time, it emphasised the role of theory in practice, the technical understanding of practice was instrumental in

[454]Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground*, 293; Murray Faure, 'Understanding Aristotle's Prudence and its Resurgence in Postmodern times', *Phronimo*n, 14:2 (2013), 52.

subverting the idea of a gentleman-physician. Was this really the moment when *techne* replaced *phronesis* as the standard model for medical practice however?

Although it is difficult to find a proper historical account of the wider intellectual and cultural shift in the understanding of practice, scholarship in general has not been completely silent on the subject. Philosophers including Jürgen Habermas and Hans-Georg Gadamer have argued that the advent of modernity diminished the primacy of *phronesis* and led to the increasing dominance of the *techne*-friendly understanding of practice. For instance, in political thought, Habermas suggests that in the early modern period, the Aristotelian assumption that 'politics was always directed towards the formation and cultivation of character' started to be challenged by Hobbes' philosophy that emphasised 'political technique, for the correct establishment of the state.'[455] Politics as *phronesis*, or as 'a prudent understanding of the situation' was still in the late eighteenth-century, according to Habermas, evident in Edmund Burke's emphasis on prudence. However, in general the mood started to give way to the Hobbesian approach that concerned the technical application of the 'knowledge of the general conditions for a correct order of the state and of society' in the forms of 'correctly calculated generation of rules, relationships, and institutions.'[456] In the context of knowledge in general, Gadamer argues that since the rise of modern science, 'the conception both of theory and of practice have fundamentally changed.'[457] Scientific knowledge, he maintains, 'for

[455] Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, John Viertel trans. (Boston, 1973), 41-42.
[456] Ibid., 43.
[457] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Enigma of Health*: *the Art of Healing in a Scientific Age* (Cambridge, 1977), 4-6.

the first time makes possible a novel relation to practice, namely, that of constructive projection and application.'[458]

Therefore, given the intellectual and scientific developments in early nineteenth-century England, it is safe to assume that it was a period when *techne* started to be seen as a framework for practice across many domains of life. This process was most clearly manifested in the increasing emphasis on the relationship between theory and practice. The appearance of writings such as James Mill's essay, 'Theory and Practice', suggests that the awareness of this relationship started to be systematically articulated during this period. Mill emphasised that practice without insight from theory was imperfect: 'The man whose mind contains the greatest number of general theories, is the man best furnished for correct practice; the man whose mind contains the smallest number the least.'[459] Unlike a liberally educated man whose potential for right practice was deeply inherent in his gentlemanly character, the theoretically-informed man in Mill's discourse attained 'correct practice' based on the acquisition of theory which served as 'a theorem for the guidance of the future'.[460] In a connection to education in general, this increasing awareness of the mutual relationship between theory and practice was reflected in the contemporary emphasis on the connection between science and art.

[458] Ibid., 6.
[459] James Mill, 'Theory and Practice. A Dialogue', *London and Westminster Review*, 3:1 (1836: Apr.), 231.
[460] Ibid., 227.

While discussing the connection between science and art in his *Rationale of Reward*[461] Jeremy Bentham stressed the indissolubility between the two: 'In whatsoever spot a portion of either is found, a portion of the other may be also seen; whatsoever spot is occupied by either, is occupied by both; is occupied by them in *joint tenancy*.'[462] He then affirmed that '[t]he distinctions of theory and practice are equally applicable to all.' He was suggesting that the separation between science and art was no longer tenable as in each of them there was a dimension of theory and practice. The science of chemistry, for example, has its practical dimension in the art of healing, as the art of machine-making has its theoretical aspect in natural philosophy. In the same spirit, Thomas Jarrold stressed that what was needed in modern education was 'to apply science to objects, as you apply grammar to language … if in the one case you would try the proficiency by the analysis of a sentence, in the other try it by the analysis of a machine …'[463] This emphasis was also evident in the diffusion-of-knowledge movement through the 1820s.

Intended for tradesmen, apothecaries and labourers, the movement was partly based on the idea that by imparting the theoretical knowledge of scientific principles to them, they would be able to improve their efficiency in work, and understand how their work-activity conformed to natural laws. Birkbeck told mechanics in Glasgow that a 'greater satisfaction in the execution of machinery must be experienced … [if] the principles on which it operates, are well understood, than where the manual part alone is known…'[464] Brougham, in one of his core texts on popular education,

[461] The section on art and science was originally written in French, probably around 1785 but not translated into English until 1825 when it appeared in *Rationale of Reward*. University College London, Bentham MSS, Portfolio 142, Folder 6 'Rationale of Reward', c. 1775, 255-256.
[462] Jeremy Bentham, *Rationale of Reward* (London, 1825), 203-204.
[463] Thomas Jarrold, 'On Education', *Monthly Magazine* (Aug. 1817), 6.
[464] 'Memoir of Dr. Birkbeck', *London Mechanics' Register*, 1 (London, 1825), xi.

stressed that 'if the workman only knows the rule without knowing the reason, he must be at fault the moment he is required make any application of it', and this was the reason why one should learn the principles of science. He further maintained that the achievement of many notable inventors such as James Watt was not only based on their work-practice as mechanics or operators of machinery but more importantly on the fact that they possessed the knowledge of scientific principles.[465] It was the same assumption that prevailed in the call for the extension of medical education. One contemporary, for instance, wrote that 'physical science is the basis of a sound and comprehensive knowledge of almost every part of medical science, considered in relation either to its theory or its practice.'[466]

As part of the diffusion-of-knowledge movement, the foundation of the London University inevitably reflected this cultural change. At the most general level, this is evident from the way in which the significance of the foundation itself was articulated in the language of theory and practice. In its official statement the council celebrated the fact that 'By the formation of an University in this metropolis, the useful intercourse of theory with active life will be facilitated' with the effect that 'speculation will be instantly tried and corrected by practice; and the man of business will more readily find principles which will bestow simplicity and order on his experimental knowledge.'[467] Other writings and speeches by the supporters and members of the institution also cherished the metropolis as the most suitable site for a modern university education because it was a location where theory meets practice. A reviewer, in his defence of the foundation, wrote that as

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[465] Henry Brougham, *The Objects, Advantages and Pleasures of Science* (London, 1827), 41-42.
[466] D.S., 'Medical Reform', 61.
[467] *Statement by the Council* …, 38.

‘eminence in science or in art can only be attained in conjunction with great practice in some profession, as in law, anatomy, medicine, and all the fine arts without exception, the Capital alone can ever furnish such professors.’ The testimonies that were sent to the council in support of the applicants for professorship also highlighted their ability in combining theory and practice. A testimony in support of the application of Robert Wallace for the chair of mathematics read ‘I have rarely met with a scientific persons, however eminent, capable of applying his own rules to *complex* Machinery.’[468]

This advantage also became a point of contrast between the London University and Oxbridge. So the above reviewer concluded that ‘the teachers who reside at the [Ancient] Universities are almost invariably a very inferior class of men to those who live and practice in London.’[469] Charles Bell in his introductory lecture to surgery and physiology expressed the same sentiment:

> In colleges, such as have been instituted in former ages, the Professors enjoy the advantages of independence and seclusion, and are removed from the distraction of our busy world. It is otherwise in London. Here professional men are differently situated, and more activity is requisite, perhaps of a different kind, less contemplative or theoretical – more practical; and to maintain a distinguished place, unceasing exertion is necessary.”[470]

Among the courses offered by the university, the significance of the ones designated as professional education was mostly expressed in terms of the mutually beneficial relationship between theory and practice. In fact it is no exaggeration to suggest that the language of theory and practice was, in this institutional context, vital in generating a sense of unity between fields that were traditionally considered as

[468] CA/A, ‘Robert Thomas to Robert Wallace, 28th Sept 1827’, *Testimonials in Favour of Robert Wallace*.
[469] ‘New University in London’, *Edinburgh Review*, 42:84 (Aug., 1825), 355.
[470] ‘London University’, *Lancet*, 1:266 (October 4, 1828), 8.

professional, namely, medicine and law, and the new ones like Engineering and Chemistry Applied to Arts. A candidate for the professorship of chemistry applied to arts, for instance, 'could not fail to observe with pleasure, the intention of the Council and other Proprietors of the University of London' to introduce two branches of chemistry, one theoretical, the other applied.[471] In this context, what a general practitioner had in common with an engineer, and a science-educated artisan were not really their identity as gentlemen, but their efficiency in their respective fields of practice as a result of the internalisation of applicable theoretical insights through formal education.

In medical discourse the undesirable gap between theory and practice was exemplified in the old distinction between what were contemporarily known as rational practitioners and empirical practitioners; and the increasing relevance of the former to practice was strongly affirmed by the members of the institution. While referring to the advancement of science, Conolly, for instance, claimed that 'the Rational physicians have continually gained more and more upon their opponents.' He further maintained that the 'avowed despisers of theory and reasoning therefore, who appeared to be justified in former periods … have been always found in later times practically defective; daily pursuing the same measures, and repeating the same faults; relying upon the supposed infallibility of their own methods.'[472] Again, here, theory was not presented as a rival alternative to practice, but as a precondition for efficient practice. It is also important to observe that the establishment of the medical school at the London University also had an impact on the wider medical culture, in the form of encouraging a systematic conceptualisation of efficient

[471] CA/A, John Deuchar to the Council of the University of London, 15th October 1827.
[472] Conolly, *Introductory Lecture*, 11.

practice in the medical profession in terms of the ability to integrate theory and practice.

For instance, partly influenced by the address of Thompson to the council of the university, one writer developed a new typology for the medical profession which was published in *The Lance*t. Contrary to the tripartite classification of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, he suggested that medical practitioners 'may be said to consist of three great classes', namely, practical men, theorists, and 'theoropractitioners'.[473] Practical men were like artisans of the medical world who 'treat their patients, more by the rule *precedent*, than according to any method suggested by *reasoning* upon the phenomena which the disease under view may present'; while theorists, who were 'diametrically opposed in disposition and practice to' practical men, 'are more active minded … possessed more extensive attainments, but they are infinitely worse practitioners and more dangerous at the bed side.'[474] The only type of practitioners who were able to avoid the deficiencies of both theorists and practical men while at the same time combining their advantages were the 'theoropractitioners': 'possessed of the practical application' of the practical men 'in combination with the mental endowments' of the theorists, 'they constitute a body of men whose service are invaluable to mankind.'[475] In general, this new attempt at classification reflected the increasing desire to think about and value medical practice in terms of the connection between theory and practice. The gentlemanly status of a practitioner certainly did not belong in this kind of scheme. The neologism, 'theoropractitioner', shows that contemporary

[473] 'On the Medical Profession', *Lancet*, 2:253, July 5 1828, 424.
[474] Ibid., 424-425.
[475] Ibid.

medical discourse urgently needed a new term to articulate the image of the ideal practitioner in light of the evolving language of theory and practice.

At this stage, it is important to clarify two main characteristics of the language of theory and practice that appear contradictory, but which were actually mutually reinforcing. First, while referring to the diffusion of knowledge to tradesmen, apothecaries, or labourers, we can see that the value of theoretical principles was stressed. This is due to the fact those subjects were already entrenched in practice in the form of apprenticeship or real work-activity. However, these theoretical insights were valued not for their own sake, but for the efficiency they brought to practice. Second, in the critiques of the educational establishment, such as Oxford and Cambridge, the reverse was the case; here the speculations and airy theories of their deans and students were ridiculed as having no practical applications. In the words of one commentator 'Science, or speculative knowledge, is only useful to social man, as it can be reduced into art, or practice, to make him better or happier.'[476] In fact the critique of theory formed part of the wider criticism of the old establishment in general. 'The inutility of theory' wrote a critic 'may be inferred from the little benefit that has been derived from it'. He then lamented that though 'the great truths of morals, religion, and government, have long been ascertained, we are comparatively little benefited by their application.'[477]

How did these two characteristics of the language mutually reinforce each other? First, by stressing that practice had to be informed by theory through formal education, it subtly dissolved the old separation between formal education and

[476] J.A.W., 'On Science', *Literary Magnet* (Jul., 1824), 281.
[477] John Wade, 'Theory and Practice', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 166 (April 4, 1835), 77.

(technical) practice. Questions about the relevance of theory to practice, in other words, often became questions about the relevance of education for individuals including general practitioners and tradesmen. This meant that the more the relationship between education and the world was understood in terms of the relationship between theory and practice, the stronger the case for the extension of education. Secondly, the charge that liberal education at Oxford and Cambridge was impractical reflected how this language presented the case for educational reform in its own terms of evaluation. By generating a discursive condition where an educational scheme could be found wanting merely for being too theoretical, it gave an impression that education was necessarily about the application of theory into practice. In giving this impression, the language of theory and practice effectively concealed the fact that traditional liberal education and the notion of a gentleman-physician rested on a totally different conception of practice.

From this discussion one can see how the attitude of the London University towards medical education and the medical profession reflected another aspect of its departure from traditional liberal education. It has been shown that many members of the institution that were involved in the formation of the medical school, such as Birkbeck, Thomson, Hume and Grant, were also active participants in the contemporary medical reform movement. It is therefore no surprise that, in line with some reformist attitudes, the institutional outlook and practice of the school was not in agreement with some elements of traditional medical culture, such as the old habit of dividing practitioners into the hierarchical distinction of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, and the assumption that the attainment of a liberal education was an essential requirement for and a marker of a good and respectable

practitioner. Through their lectures, addresses and publications, the members of the medical school called for the need to make formal medical education accessible to lower-class medical practitioners, and stressed that it was the mastery of medical sciences alone that should determine the reputation and standing of a medical professional. Finally, by promoting the image of an ideal medical practitioner as an efficient practitioner, characterised by his ability to apply scientific theories to practice, the discourse of the medical school also provided a rival professional identity to the old character of the gentleman-physician. This concern of the founders and members of the university with the application of theories to practice, however, was related to their broader assumption that the inhabitants of the metropolis required useful education. In the next chapter we shall see how the utilitarian character of the London University represented another aspect of the challenge to traditional liberal education.

Chapter Five

Utilitarian Sensibility and Liberal Education

It has been shown in previous chapters that by situating the foundation of the London University the context of the wider campaigns for middle-class university education and medical reform one can see its departure from the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education. In this chapter we shall examine the significance of the establishment in relation to another cultural formation in the 1820s, namely the rise of what we identify as the utilitarian sensibility. This development was manifested in the new cultural and ideological status acquired by 'the useful' which was reflected in the emergence of the term 'utilitarian' itself. Although admitting that he did not invent the term, John Stuart Mill credited himself with popularising the word 'utilitarian' through his foundation of the Utilitarian society in 1822. 'It was the first time', he claimed, 'that any one had taken the title of Utilitarian; and the term made its way into the language from this humble source.'[478] As in the case of 'liberal' in liberal education, the interpretation of the word 'utility' is not straightforward, and historians of liberal education have been inattentive to the contemporary sense of 'being utilitarian'. Therefore, before proceeding to the analysis of the tension between the new sensibility and the traditional sense of being liberal, it is vital to clarify what we mean by utilitarian sensibility in the context of educational culture in the period. This will be carried out in the next part by first assessing the historical validity of the manner in which the utilitarian character of the London University is usually understood.

[478] J.S. Mill, *Autobiography* (New York, 1924), 56.

A Utilitarian Institution?

London University is one of the few educational establishments in history that have been continuously referred to as a utilitarian institution. The debates among historians on whether it is plausible to characterise the university as utilitarian revolves around the question of how far its ethos was influenced by Benthamite ideas. Even in the recent historical literature the institution continues to be associated with Benthamism, as when Boyd Hilton maintains that the spirit of Bentham 'suffused London University'.[479] However, as we will show, it is problematic to describe or measure the utilitarian character of the institution in these terms; rather, it should be grounded in the other contemporary understanding of being utilitarian which was derived from the ordinary meaning of utility. It is based on this sense of utility that the utilitarian sensibility can be seen as a rival alternative to the traditional sense of being liberal. We shall begin our examination by exploring the historiographical focus on Benthamite utilitarianism as a framework for interpreting the utilitarian character of the London University.

As a philosophical school, Benthamite utilitarianism was developed by Jeremy Bentham over a period of time beginning in the late eighteenth century until his death in the early 1830s. Given its complexity and subjection to various scholarly interpretations, we shall limit our discussion to its basic tenets.[480] His philosophy rested on the famous maxim that the rightness and wrongness of an action should be determined by measuring the extent to which it promoted the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This maxim applies to both moral and legal circumstances, and in the private and public domains, though Bentham himself was primarily interested

[479] Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (New York, 2008), 328.
[480] James E. Crimmins, 'Contending Interpretations of Bentham's Utilitarianism', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 29:4 (Dec 1996), *752*-777.

in its legal application. Any judgment that is based on this maxim is said to conform to what Bentham called 'the principle of utility' or 'the greatest happiness principle'.[481] Historically, after the first decade of the nineteenth century, Benthamite utilitarianism attracted a considerable number of followers; perhaps the most notable was James Mill, who was an accomplished thinker in his own right. The 1820s were significant in this respect as this was the time when the followers of Bentham and Mill began to be widely known as utilitarians, Benthamites, or philosophic radicals, which signified their increasing presence as a distinctive political and ideological force.[482]

Some historians take the view that Bentham and the utilitarians played key roles in terms of participating in the foundation or in supplying the ideological bedrock for the London University. The origins of this view are traceable to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In his *The English Utilitarians*, Leslie Stephen regarded the University of London 'as the one practical achievement of the utilitarians … so far as its foundation was due to them.'[483] Later, Elie Halévy called the institution a 'Radical University', and claimed that its establishment was a continuation of an earlier utilitarian project, the *Chrestomathic* school[484] which had failed in 1822.[485] However, neither Stephens nor Halévy clarifies why the

[481] Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, eds. J.H. Burns and H.L.A Hart (Oxford, 1970). 11.
[482] William Thomas, *The Philosophic Radicals: Nine Studies in Theory and Practice 1817-1841* (New York, 1979), 2.

[483] Leslie Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, 3 vols. (London, 1900) ii. 33.

[485] Elie Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (London, 1928), 482-483; *Chrestomathia* is a Greek word for 'useful learning'. The scheme of the *Chrestomathic* Day School was outlined by Jeremy Bentham in his work, *Chrestomathia*, which was first published in 1817. Basically, it was based on the monitorial system of Andrew Bell. In that system, abler students would assist teachers in passing on the information that they had acquired to other students. This system was appealing because it was considered cheap yet efficient. Some historians regard *Chrestomathia* as the

establishment was a utilitarian achievement, apart from alluding to the involvement of the utilitarians in the foundation. Furthermore, the fact of their involvement alone is hardly adequate to substantiate this view, not least because they did not make up the majority of the founding members. A significant number of Whigs, especially Scots, like James Mackintosh, were also involved in the project.[486]

Since the mere fact of their participation in the establishment of the institution is inadequate to justify the characterisation of the university as utilitarian, other historians focus on the importance of their intellectual or ideological contributions. For instance, although he acknowledges that the influence of Bentham on the university was indirect, namely through his main disciple James Mill, Hugh Hale Bellot affirms that '[t]he intellectual debt of the university' to Bentham 'is beyond dispute'.[487] However, as in the case of Stephen and Halévy, he never clarifies the extent to which utilitarian thought really developed into the ideological foundation of the university. Despite these problems, it is obvious that the tendency to magnify the roles of Bentham and the utilitarians continues to influence historians. Gordon Huelin, an historian of King's, for example, claims that the University of London 'had been brought into being in 1826 through the efforts of Jeremy Bentham, and his secularist friends Henry Brougham, James Mill, and Joseph Hume'.[488] Historians of education, John Lawson and Harold Silver maintain that the reason why the early

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utilitarian legacy to education. See, for example, Elissa S. Itzkin, 'Bentham's Chrestomathia: Utilitarian Legacy to English Education', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 39: 2, (Apr.-Jun., 1978), 303-316. However, Brian Taylor disputes Itzkin's view, arguing that Bentham's *Chrestomathia* is not representative of the utilitarian legacy to education since his educational thought is scattered throughout his other writings too. See, Brian Taylor, 'A Note in Response to Itzkin's 'Bentham's Chrestomathia: Utilitarian Legacy to English Education', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 43:2 (Apr.-Jun., 1982), 309-313.

[486] In fact, it was Mackintosh who proposed the university to be named as 'London University' in the first meeting of the founding committee at the City of London Tavern on the 1st of July 1825. Bellot, 20.

[487] Ibid, 25

[488] Gordon Huelin, *King's College London 1828-1978* (London, 1978), 2.

development of the university was 'met with hostility and suspicion' was mainly 'because of its association with the forces of utilitarianism and dissent'.[489] Numerous references to the university as a 'utilitarian enterprise' or 'utilitarian university' testify to the prevalence of this assumption. Michael Sanderson, for instance, suggests that the university was meant 'to be useful and vocational following Bentham's belief in a utilitarian education'.[490]

This assumption has been challenged by scholars of utilitarian thought, who emphasise the disjuncture between philosophy and practice. For instance, J.H. Burns argues convincingly that the claim for Bentham's personal involvement in and influence on the foundation is virtually baseless. Bentham did not participate in the public discussions that led to the foundation of the institution and later failed in his attempts to secure the chair of English Literature for John Bowring, his close disciple and editor of the *Westminster Review*, and to nominate Leslie Grove Jones as a member of the council.[491] These unsuccessful interventions in the affairs of the institution suggest his limited influence.[492] Burns is equally sceptical about the view that Bentham's ideas suffused the university, as it is difficult to see how the practices and principles of the institution were based on them. For instance, in terms of teaching methods, the London University in its early years adopted the approach of Edinburgh University, which was based on lectures, thus contradicting Bentham's preference for a system of teaching that encouraged two-way

[489] John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London, 1973), 258.
[490] Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change and Society in England 1780-1870* (London, 1983), 47.
[491] University College London, College Correspondence, 1556, Jeremy Bentham to Leonard Horner, the warden of the University of London, July 3, 1829.
[492] J.H. Burns, *Jeremy Bentham and University College* (London, 1962), 3.

interactions between teachers and students.[493] All this suggests that the university 'could not be in any simple sense a fulfilment of Bentham's ideas'.[494]

The contribution of James Mill to the institutional practices of the university has also been examined by historians. This is important because, unlike his mentor, Mill was directly involved in the affairs of the institution as a member of the Council. Burston shows that although there were traces of his educational philosophy in the curriculum of the institution, one should be careful in assuming that Mill was strictly concerned with the application of his theory of education. In fact, he was more flexible than his friend Francis Place in practical matters. For instance, when Rev. Henry Browne was appointed as the headmaster of University of London School, Place was outraged while Mill himself endorsed the appointment despite being opposed to any religious influence on education.[495] Therefore, despite their central administrative positions at the university, the utilitarians were not really preoccupied with converting the institution into a Benthamite university. They were aware of the limitations that they faced due to the need to negotiate with the other founding members who did not share their philosophical convictions. Hence, it appears that labels such as 'utilitarian university' and 'Benthamite University' hardly give an accurate historical description of the character of the London University. However, despite their differences, it could be argued that, those who describe the university as utilitarian and their critics labour under a misconception about the subject, in that they both measure the utilitarian character in terms of its relative proximity to Benthamite utilitarianism. In other words, the problem with previous considerations is that they unquestioningly equate utility with Benthamism.

[493] Ibid., 12.
[494] Ibid., 7.
[495] W.H Burston, *James Mill on Philosophy and Education* (London, 1973), 75.

In order to overcome this problem, a new perspective is offered here which will allow us to look more closely and comprehensively at the meaning of 'being utilitarian' in the educational context of this period, and which subsequently will enable us to understand that utilitarian sensibility was a rival to liberal education.

Rethinking the Historical Meaning of 'Being Utilitarian'.

While discussing the word 'utilitarian', Raymond Williams notes that it has one complication. On the one hand, it is a description of a philosophical system, on the other, a 'description of a limited class of qualities or interests, practical or material'.[496] In historical practice – as testified by numerous discussions on David Hume's and Bentham's concept of utility – only philosophical utility stands as a subject of serious historical inquiry.[497] However, this chapter argues that it was based on the other sense of the word 'utility' that contemporaries discerned the presence of the utilitarian sensibility in education, and thus understood the utilitarian nature of the London University. It will be called 'ordinary utility' here because that was the sense of utility in everyday language and in contrast to the philosophical discourse. Basically, there are five aspects of ordinary utility that we need to grasp in order to understand its significance in the educational discourse of this period: its pervasiveness in everyday language, its reference to the practical and material dimensions of life, its contrast to ornament, its connection to philosophical utility and finally, its relation to gentlemanly culture.

[496] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, 1985), 327.
[497] See, for instance, D.G. Long, 'Utility and Utility Principle: Hume, Smith, Bentham and Mill', *Utilitas*, 2:1 (1990), 12-39; Frederick Rosen, *Classical Utilitarianism from Hume to Mill* (London, 2003), 29-57; James E. Crimmins, *Utilitarian Philosophy and Politics: Bentham's Later Years* (London, 2011) 79-85.

Ordinary utility was pervasively used in the everyday language of the period. By this we mean the word had a much wider range of application to subjects related to everyday affairs than it has now. To demonstrate this, we can see that out of 202 articles published in 1827 that contained the word 'utility' in *The Times*, almost 36 percent (72 articles) fell under the category 'news'. While in 1984, out of 260 articles, only 10 percent (26 articles) appeared in the news with this term.[498] The frequency of the presence of the word 'utility' under the category 'news' is important for our inquiry as it suggests the extent to which the word was part of the discourse of everyday affairs. However, there were also qualitative differences in the usage. If we compare the nature of the usage in the 1820s and 1980s, we see that the latter was much more restrictive, often carrying technical connotations.[499] 'Utility' in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, for instance, was employed as a 'critical concept' to test the value of anything from the 'utility of the house of Lords', and the 'utility of the jury system' to the 'utility of holidays', the 'utility of a horse', and the 'utility of teeth'.[500] This suggests that although the word 'utility' in the period might appear similar to what we understand today as 'usefulness'; its significance was much richer and broader than in the current usage.

The second thing to observe about 'ordinary utility' is its reference to the practical and material dimensions of life as opposed to the contemplative, emotional, and aesthetic aspects. Williams maintains that the utility of a thing was often understood

[498] 'Times Digital Archives', *British Library Newspapers Database*, Accessed May 28, 2012.
[499] The result for 1984 for instance shows that even when the word appears under the category of 'news', many of the usages were in the form of compounds like 'utility suits', utility helicopter', 'utility industries', or 'gas utility'. In these compounds, just like in 'utility bills' and 'utility company', the word 'utility' has only a passive appearance, and thus lacks evaluative force.
[500] Paul Eurialius Jullion, *A Practical Essay on Human Teeth: Explaining the Art of effectually preserving the Health, Utility, and Beauty of the Teeth, Gums and Contiguous Parts of the Mouth*… (London, 1781), 36; 'Utility of the House of Lords', *Bristol Mercury*, Monday November 20, 1820; 'Utility of Holidays', *Manchester Times and Gazette*, Saturday Oct. 3, 1829.

in reference to its practical, economical and material qualities. He illustrates this by quoting a sentence from a text published in 1859: 'Turning from the picturesque or romantic to the utilitarian view of this tree.' Based on this, Williams argues that, although one might want to talk of the utility or use of a tree from its aesthetic dimension, for instance, as a subject for painting, 'use' 'is not easy in such range.' The employment of the word 'utilitarian' signifies a split between aesthetic, contemplative and emotional activities on the one hand, and practical, economical, and material on the other.[501] Though Williams uses an example from the mid-nineteenth century, it is easy to identify the split in the everyday language of the early nineteenth and even eighteenth centuries. An advertisement for 'Mascara Oil' in 1806, a product used 'for accelerating and improving the growth of hair', was entitled *Utility and Elegance Combined*. It talked about the 'useful' and the 'elegant' dimensions of the products in the following words: 'Its *utility* is evinced by, preserving the hair from falling off, or changing its colour; its *elegance*, by producing the most smooth and beautiful gloss ever known.'[502] Another example is a newspaper article that discussed the utility of holidays, where the use of holidays was said to reside in the profits that they brought to grocers and the increase of the productivity of labours during working days.[503] This suggests that the sense of 'utility' referred to practical and material interests was there in the ordinary and everyday lived experience.

However, it is vital to note that the differentiation between utility on the one hand and ornament on the other was not a distinction in terms of degree of importance. This brings us to the third aspect of ordinary utility, namely the nature of its relation

[501] Williams, *Keywords*, 328.
[502] 'Utility and Elegance Combined, Mascara Oil', *The Times*, Tuesday December 30, 1806, 4.
[503] 'Utility of Holidays'.

to ornament. As Klein points out, in the eighteenth century, just as 'agreeableness seconded merit in persons, so ornament seconded utility in things'.[504] This means that collocations such as 'utility and ornament' or 'useful and delightful' that often appeared in the texts of the period should not be read as expressions that prioritised utility over the inner dimensions of life. Rather, they were used to suggest that things had a balanced and whole character. In other words, 'utility' and 'beauty' or 'ornament' were complementary to each other.[505] Whenever one was invoked normally the other one was placed next to it. Thus it is quite typical, for instance, for works in the period to contain a collocation in their title such as in *Useful and Delightful Instructions by Way Between the Master & his Scholar*. Its contents were not divided into the useful and the ornamental parts as the collocation there was primarily meant as an expression of balance.[506]

Another crucial point about 'ordinary utility' is regarding the nature of its relation to 'philosophical utility'. First, it is important to understand that Bentham's philosophical treatment of the word 'utility' was remote from 'ordinary utility'. As D.G Long notes, while formulating his idea of utility Bentham was 'not under the illusion that every day "talk" can or ought to become perfectly descriptive'.[507] Even when compared to Hume's, Bentham's utility was far more detached from the ordinary and everyday usages.[508] Hume observed that:

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[504] Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *Historical Journal*, 45:4 (Dec. 2002), 874.
[505] For eighteenth-century philosophical debates on the relation between utility and beauty see Paul Guyer, 'Beauty and Utility in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* (Spring 2002), 439-453.
[506] *Useful and Delightful Instructions by Way between the Master & His Scholar, Containing the Duty the Children* (London, 1712); Thomas Cadell, *A Catalogue of Approved English Books; in Several Branches of Useful and Ornamental Literature* (London, 1775).
[507] Long, '"Utility" and the "Utility Principle"', 32
[508] Ibid., 33. in his work Crimmins suggests that the difference between Hume and Bentham with regard to 'utility was that the former sought to explain the common moral sense of the ordinary

> In common life, we may observe, that the circumstance of utility is always appealed to; nor is it supposed, that a greater eulogy can be given to any man, than to display his usefulness to the public, and enumerate the services, which he has performed to mankind and society [emphasis added].[509]

His allusion to 'common life' as the starting point of his discussion of 'utility' suggests that his treatment of the subject was not far detached from the everyday sense of the word. Bentham, on the contrary, treated 'utility' as a pure and precise philosophical concept, devoid of everyday baggage. In fact, this was how he explored the significance of his own treatment of utility. For instance, in his *Article on Utilitarianism* written in 1829, Bentham sketched a brief history of the concept of utility from antiquity to his own time. He placed his contribution at the end of the narrative. Interestingly, the metanarrative that underpinned the history was centred on how gradually through time 'utility' emerged as a concept that could be employed with greater theoretical precision and rigour; this involved an increasingly self-conscious detachment from the everyday sense.[510]

This alternative way of considering the relation between 'philosophical utility' and 'ordinary utility' is significant because it recognizes that no matter how strict a philosophical attitude a thinker adopted in dealing with 'utility', still, he could not escape from occasionally using the word in the everyday sense. This is simply because even philosophers had to live in the world and at times could not avoid articulating their concerns in everyday language. As will be demonstrated later, it

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people, thus was descriptive in approach, while the latter was eager to apply 'utility' as 'a prescriptive guide to conduct and especially legislation'. (Crimmins, *Utilitarian Philosophy and Politics*, 84-85).

[509] David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* ed. L.A. Selby Bigge (Oxford, 1902), 212.

[510] Jeremy Bentham, 'Article on Utilitarianism: Short Version', in Arthur Goldworth (ed.), *Deontology together with a Table of the Springs of Action and Article on Utilitarianism*, (Oxford, 1983), 321.

was in educational discourse that even Bentham and his followers slipped into using the word 'utility' in a sense closer to the ordinary use than their philosophical one. Given the pervasiveness of the idea of 'ordinary utility', one also needs to consider the possibility that in the 1820s, contemporaries could meaningfully use the word 'utilitarian' in a way that was not restricted to Bentham and his disciples. *The Examiner,* for instance, used it to describe someone's personality: 'Mr. Martin we find is a utilitarian as well as a painter; he deals in matters of fact as well in matters of fancy.'[511] The simultaneous designations, 'utilitarian' and 'painter', signified a balanced personality, just like the collocation 'useful and ornamental' in the everyday texts.

Finally, let us consider the relationship between ordinary utility and gentlemanly culture in general. It was not uncommon for gentlemen and the upper classes to be lauded for their useful activities, as in the praise for 'the valuable and useful classes of Country Gentlemen, who discharged the duties of magistracy'.[512] However, 'being useful', unlike 'being liberal', was not really seen as an exclusive quality of a gentleman. In fact, it could be argued that being useful tended to be associated more with the vulgar and the lower orders than the gentlemanly class. Leisure, which characterised the life of the gentlemanly classes, led to a minimal concern for practical utility among gentlemen. The aristocratic capacity to dispense with practical and utilitarian concerns was reflected in matters as trivial as an obsession with fashionable dress. As Linda Colley maintains, it was its 'elegance, cost, and complete impracticality' that made 'French fashion' appealing to the aristocrats. 'Dressed in this manner' gentlemen 'became peacocks who manifestly did not need

[511] 'Supply of Pure Water', *Examiner*, October 5, 1828.
[512] *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, Thursday March 22, 1798.

to work.'[513] Unlike their superiors, the lower orders were usually praised for their utility and function. The fact that they were valued in this manner was partly reflected in the social practice of referring to them in terms of their occupations such as in 'John Hart, husbandmen, or James Buckland, carpenter.'[514] The outbreak of the French Revolution, however, introduced to the English cultural imagination the possibility of ideological and political contestation between the useful and the liberal. English newspapers, for instance, reported a discussion in France about the need to abolish the distinction between liberal arts and useful arts due to a resolution that exempted physicians, sculptors and painters from the tax on patents. On this a French republican, Lecoulteux, reportedly argued that:

> We ought not … encourage the preference given to the Arts called Liberal, especially by exemptions from imposts. They are, at best, only agreeable arts. Labour is the author, and the preserver of liberty; and [therefore] he who exercises an useful art, exercises one that is among the liberal arts. A Constitution which should make any one class of the arts privileged would be fatal to Liberty. It would discourage the others called mechanic.[515]

In England, by the 1820s and 1830s, the lower orders were often referred to as 'the useful classes', which partly reflected the growing political consciousness of the workingmen who were beginning to define their interests in opposition to those of the aristocracy. For example, an essay entitled 'An Instance of the Moral Power of the Useful Classes', which was published in a radical newspaper, criticised the Reform Bill which it claimed had neglected the labouring poor. The author complained that in the new Bill 9 out of 10 'of the useful class will not be

[513] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707 – 1837*, Revised Edition (London, 2009), 168-169.
[514] Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: Further Explored* (London, 1965), 45.
[515] *Telegraph*, Monday, January 9, 1797.

represented at all'.[516] In similar polemical fashion, another author stressed that '[i]n no one instance has the undue influence of the aristocracy of England over the more useful classes of society been manifested to a greater extent, than in the comparative exemption which it has contrived to secure for itself from the pressure of taxation'. He lamented that 'the system is the same throughout' in which 'the aristocracy escape, and the useful classes of society are made to suffer'.[517] Also by the 1830s the meaning of the term 'useful knowledge' tended to be more narrowly understood as a form of knowledge suitable for the labouring classes which only covered useful and fascinating facts 'about rail-roads, and steam-engines, and elephants and hippopotamuses'.[518]

From here it is clear that the period of the foundation of the London University coincided with a time when the tension between the useful and the liberal escalated. But what were the implications of this contest for liberal education? It should be observed that the contrast between 'the liberal' and 'the useful' is not uncommon in the historiography of education. It has been claimed, for instance, that 'the tension between what is "liberal" and what is "useful" is of one of the oldest and most persistent problems in education.'[519] Likewise, when Sanderson suggests that Edgeworth's *Essays on Professional Education* (1809) was the first systematic attack on the concept of liberal education, he attributed this to the utilitarian viewpoint that it represented.[520] However, often claims about this contrast are not

[516] 'An Instance of the Moral Power of the Useful Classes', *Poor Man's Guardian*, Saturday November 5, 1831.
[517] 'Aristocratic Taxation – the Inhabited House of Duty', *Bristol Mercury*, Saturday April 13, 1833.
[518] A Rustic Christian Observer, 'Definition of Useful Knowledge', *Christian Observer*, 32 (1832), 651.
[519] Earl F. Cheit, *The Useful Arts and the Liberal Tradition* (New York, 1975), 3.
[520] Michael Sanderson, *Education, Economic Change, and Society in England 1780-1870*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge, 1995), 42.

based on an adequate historical understanding of the contemporary sense of being liberal and being useful. This makes these accounts vulnerable to criticism from scholars who argue that there is scarcely any tension at all between what is liberal and what is useful, 'unless one is to define "useful" narrowly, meaning profit seeking or money-making'.[521] Therefore, by grounding the contemporary sense of being utilitarian in ordinary utility, this study intends to restate the case for the contrast between the useful and the liberal in educational discourse.

'The Useful' and 'the Liberal' in Educational Discourse

If Kimball is right that the tension between liberal education and the useful is only possible when 'useful' is narrowly understood as a 'profit seeking or money-making' enterprise, the 1820s and 1830s were truly the moment which met this condition. In the educational discourse of the period the understanding of useful in such terms was pervasive. An observer, for instance, complained 'that people constantly take the word "useful" … and mean by it … what tends most to get money for him; and therefore they call professional education a very useful thing.' This means that they considered worthless 'the time which is spent in general education, whether moral or religious … especially if it interferes with the other education, to which they confine the name of "useful"; that is, the education which enables a man to gain his livelihood.'[522] However, it is wrong to assume that the tension between utility and liberal education only emerged in the 1820s. Since the

[521] Bruce A. Kimball, 'Liberal versus Useful Education: Reconsidering the Contrast and Its Lineage,' *Teachers College Record*, 87: 4 (Summer 1986), 584: Rothblatt also agrees with this view (Sheldon Rothblatt, 'The Limbs of Osiris: Liberal Education in the English Speaking World', in Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock (eds.) *The European and American University since 1800* (Cambridge, 1993), 27).

[522] 'What is Education?', *Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, 1:13 (June 16, 1832), 109-110.

late eighteenth century, there was already a notable sign of this tension in educational discourse, which was marked by two developments: first, the propensity among critics of the educational establishment to question liberal education in terms of its utility; and second, the new tendency to employ the binary 'useful and ornamental' which was understood in terms of priority measured according to the degree of usefulness.

Several educational writings towards the end of the long eighteenth century did manifest the sign of tension between 'the useful' and 'the liberal'. First, there was a tendency to question the worth of liberal subjects, especially classics, in terms of their utility. A writer in the *Edinburgh Magazine*, for instance, tried to convince his audience that if we abandon classics we may benefit 'from the many useful and well known arts which have been the inventions of the modern ages', and elsewhere he complained that the study of classics 'by the English nation has been one of the greatest obstructions that ever has been thrown in the way of the propagation of useful knowledge.'[523] Later, William Stevenson claimed that 'hitherto it [classics] has been too generally exalted and admired, without any conviction of its value and importance, or even examination into its comparative utility.'[524] What was novel about the concern of both authors was their subjection of classics to the evaluative language of utility, thus levelling the playing field between classics and other subjects. In this respect the status difference between liberal and illiberal was no longer observed.

[523] 'An Inquiry into the Inutility of a Knowledge of Latin and Greek Languages', *Edinburgh Magazine*, 10:60 (December 1789), 380-381.
[524] William Stevenson, *Remarks on the Very Inferior Utility of Classical Learning* (Manchester, 1796), 4.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the defenders of liberal education were aware that 'The first and common question of such persons [critics of liberal education] is, "Of what use is an academic education?"'[525] The word 'use' as it appeared in the question was already seen as a cultural marker in the educational discourse of this time. The idea of 'the useful' therefore haunted the defenders of establishments and shaped their line of reasoning. For instance, in his famous work defending Oxford against the critiques of the *Edinburgh Review*, Edward Copleston highlighted the problem of an obsession with immediate utility in education:

> *Utility* if it means anything, means that which is conducive to some good end. Thus a thing may be useful which is not good in itself, provided it lead to what is good. Now all those arts and studies which relate to the improvement of manufactures, and to the raising or multiplying the means of subsistence, terminate merely in the bodily wants of man. Our houses are better furnished, our table may be better supplied, our travelling more commodious; all these are very desirable ends. But will any man who aspires to the name of philosopher maintain, that these are the principal ends of human life – that a rational being is most nobly occupied in supplying his bodily want – in ministering to the caprices of fashion in dress, in building, in equipage, or in diet?[526]

Then he asserted that one might study subjects that have immediate practical outcomes, such as Chemistry, Botany and Mineralogy, and as a result of that 'become a skilful agriculturist, an improver of manufactures, an useful inspector of roads, mines, and canals: but all distinguishing grace, which a liberal education imparts, he foregoes for ever.'[527] Here one can see how a staunch defender of liberal education emphasised the inferior status of the useful to the liberal. Note, for instance, how Copleston recognised that an 'inspector of roads' was useful; his point

[525] 'Defence of Liberal Education', *Morning Post*, December 31, 1813.
[526] Edward Copleston, *A Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review Against Oxford, containing an account of Studies Pursued in that University* (London, 1810), 165-166.
[527] Ibid., 175-176.

was it was *merely* useful and that there was nothing liberal about that individual performing that job.

This increasing tension between 'the useful' and 'the liberal' was further signified by the rising employment of the binary 'useful and ornamental' which was meant to highlight the superiority of the former. In the first half of the eighteenth century, such a tendency was absent. For instance, when talking about the education of the youth in a work published in 1747, Benjamin Franklin suggested that ideally young people should 'be taught *every Thing* that is useful and *every Thing* that is ornamental', but since time is limited, they should only learn 'those Things that are likely to be *most useful* and *most ornamental*.'[528] Here 'useful' and 'ornamental' went hand in hand. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, there was already a propensity to treat 'the ornamental' as of lesser importance. A novel entitled *Utility; or Sketches of Domestic Education* conveyed this sentiment in a scene where a young girl converses with her governess over the ugliness and usefulness of a magnetic needle. When shown the instrument, the girl says, 'It does not look very remarkable: it is rather an ugly thing', to which the governess replies, 'This has been many years in my possession, and is one among many proofs, that fine and costly articles are far from being the most useful to us.'[529]

Indeed, it was in educational discourse that the use of this binary became standard for critics. For instance, after acknowledging that 'classical knowledge is taught to boys, rather than natural and scientific truth' one author went on to claim that 'the former may qualify them to be critics, and is a proper *ornamental* knowledge for

[528] Benjamin Franklin, *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania* (Philadelphia, 1931), 11.
[529] *Utility; or Sketches of Domestic Education* (London, 1815), 29.

people of fortune; but Natural Knowledge affords useful practical truths, calculated for the general body of the people and the interest of the state.'[530] The same sense of usage may also be found in the educational writings of utilitarians such as Bentham's *Chrestomathia*. When replying to the anticipated objection to his exclusion of classics from the *Chrestomathic* scheme, Bentham gave the following answer:

> For the use of which the proposed system of instruction is designed, useful and not merely ornamental instruction is required. Except in as far as ornamental is considered as a species of useful … [and surely] no degree of acquaintance with any of the dead languages can surely be placed to the account of use.[531]

Although Elissa Itzkin maintains Bentham was here imposing the criteria of 'usefulness'[532], it is clear that there was nothing peculiarly Benthamite about it. Bentham here was just employing the metaphor available in the educational discourse of his time, which was based on 'ordinary utility'. In the next part we shall demonstrate that the foundation of the London University in the mid-1820s represented an institutional manifestation of this utilitarian sensibility, and therefore signified a departure from the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education.

University of London: Utilitarian Education and Liberal Education

The employment of utility as an evaluative criterion permeated the discourse of the foundation of the London University. Thomas Campbell, in one of his earliest public proposals for the foundation of the university, subjected the traditional notion of liberal education to the test of utility. He began by asserting that it was 'a vestige

[530] 'Wednesday's and Thursday's Posts', *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post,* February 17, 1803.
[531] Jeremy Bentham, *Chrestomathia* (eds.) M.J Smith and W.H Burston (New York, 1983), 39.
[532] Itzkin, 'Bentham's Chrestomathia', 315.

of barbarism in our language that learning only means, in its common acceptation, a knowledge of the dead languages and mathematics'. Then, with regard to the privileging of both subjects as liberal knowledge, he begged to know, 'what kind of knowledge can be called illiberal?' Campbell was critical of the language that categorized subjects into liberal and illiberal as for him 'All knowledge is more or less useful.'[533] The phrase 'more or less useful' was in accordance with the binary useful and ornamental in the sense that an 'ornament' was not useless, but less useful, which also implies that all knowledge was to be evaluated according to how useful it was. Later, there was a notable tendency among the founders, members and supporters of the university to justify its foundation in terms of utility.

For instance, in an essay published in the *Edinburgh Review*, the young T.B. Macaulay conceived the significance of the new university in terms of its role as a bastion of useful learning which he thought was what an educational institution was supposed to be:

> Whatever language, whatever art, whatever science, it might at any time be useful to know, that men would surely learn, and would as surely find instructors to teach. The professor who should persist in devoting his attention to branches of knowledge which had become useless, would soon be deserted by his pupils.[534]

In criticizing the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, Macaulay quipped that, 'A chartered and endowed College, strong in its wealth and its degrees, does not find it necessary, to teach what is useful, because it can pay men to learn what is useless.'[535] He proceeded to blast the two subjects favoured by the ancient universities, mathematics and classics, complaining that 'very few of our academical

[533]Thomas Campbell, 'Suggestions Respecting the Plan of an University in London', *New Monthly Magazine*, 13:49 (January 1825), 406.
[534] [Thomas B. Macaulay], 'The London University', *Edinburgh Review*, 43:86 (Feb., 1826), 327.
[535] Ibid.

mathematicians turn their knowledge to such practical purposes' as 'making almanacks and measuring lands'.[536] The employment of this language in the defence of the University of London implies the significance of 'utility' as central to the ethos of the new institution and what distinguished it from the ancient universities. The supporters of the university did not deliberately create the image of the institution as a bastion of useful knowledge in order to meet the challenge of its critics; rather, they themselves had a firm conviction that 'being useful' was what the university need to be all about. Indeed, seen as the only alternative to Oxford and Cambridge, the new institution was regarded by some as the highest institutional manifestation of useful knowledge in England. The London Mathematical Society, for instance, in its letter to the Council of the London University dated 12 August 1826, expressed its deep interest in the foundation of the university, which it considered as 'an institution so much calculated for the promotion of useful knowledge'.[537]

This utilitarian ethos of the institution seeped into the consciousness of some of its members and to some extent influenced the way they looked at their positions in it. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the introductory lecture to Greek language delivered by George Long on November 4, 1828. As it was an introduction, it was natural for Long to talk about the relevance of the study. Thus, he began with the following words:

[536] Ibid. 328. In a letter to his father on 26 July 1826, we know that Macaulay's articles in the review, including this one, were praised by Sydney Smith, the former editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, though he also warned the young Whig of the danger that he was 'taking a tone of too much asperity and contempt in controversy'. Thomas Pinney (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, 6 vols. (London, 1974), i. 217.

[537] University College London, College Correspondence, 79, J. Stainton (Secretary to London Mathematical Society) to Thomas Coates, 12 August 1826.

> at the opening of a University established for the purpose of diffusing useful knowledge, it may be fairly expected that we should state distinctly what advantages may be derived from one or two years diligent study of the best Greek writers.[538]

The reason why Long felt the need to 'state distinctly' the benefits of classics was because he knew that the common justifications for the subject (advanced by members of Oxford and Cambridge) were inadequate to meet the expectations of his audience and the institution. For Long, although various essays had been written to justify the importance of classical studies, 'this is not done by showing the real nature of the study, with its immediate and remoter uses' but rather merely 'by vague declamation, appeals to authority, to established usage, and not unfrequently by an affected contempt for other kinds of knowledge'. He warned that the defenders of classics should be aware that they were competing with 'some of the able and ardent promoters of scientific acquirements, and their application to the necessary and useful purposes of life'.[539] This warning implied that Long already accepted 'utility' as the standard by which the worth of the discipline was to be measured. In fact, in his earlier correspondence with Horner, the warden, Long declared his commitment to this cause: 'It is our wish and our intention, as far as we are able, to make the study of Latin and Greek more complete and more useful than it is at present in most of our places of public instructions.'[540] Hence, what Long did not share with other defenders of classics was their use of liberal education as the language of justification.

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[538] *An Introductory Lecture Delivered in the University of London, on Tuesday, November 4, 1828, by George Long, A.M. Professor of the Greek Language, Literature, and Antiquities*, 2nd edition (London, 1829), 4.
[539] Ibid., 4-5.
[540] University College London, College Correspondence, 873, George Long to Leonard Horner, n.d., 1828.

To put this in perspective, we can contrast Long's introduction to the one given at King's College London, a rival institution. Delivered on 17 October 1831, the speaker Joseph Anstice began his lecture with the following remark: 'An attempt to defend the cultivation of Classical Literature in country where it has long been esteemed necessary to the completion of a liberal education may perhaps be deemed superfluous,' but he thought it reasonable to start with a discussion of the advantages of the study only because 'the reasons on which it was originally grounded are frequently forgotten'.[541] Unlike Long, Anstice did not find it necessary to justify classics in a new way, as for him the authority of the subject had been traditionally guaranteed by its liberal status. In reply to the 'objection which has been advanced against polite learning', that it was 'deficient in utility', he asserted that 'before we decide what pursuits are useful to man, we should clearly comprehend his nature … he has feelings to be improved; taste to be cultivated; practical judgment to be matured.'[542] Therefore, the cases of Macaulay and Long show that as an aspect of a new educational mentality, the utilitarian sensibility can be characterised by peculiar assumptions and attitudes toward education which need not be expressed through systematic or philosophical articulations. They can be seen in simple normative remarks such as 'classics is useless'.

Another notable feature of this utilitarian ethos was the increasing use of the binary of utility and ornament as an alternative to that of liberal and illiberal. The early years of the University of London witnessed the employment of this contrast. For instance, an essay entitled 'On Education', published in the first volume of the *London University Magazine* in 1829, criticized the dominance of classics in English

[541] *, An Introductory Lecture, Delivered at King's College, London, October 17, 1831, by Joseph Anstice* (London, 1831), 3.
[542] Ibid., 3-4.

educational establishments, arguing that education ought 'to postpone mere ornament to utility'. The writer remarked that 'if we must be decked in gold lace, top-knots and bag wigs, at least, give us necessary clothing; shirts and coats to our backs, and shoes to run about in.'[543] More interestingly, this binary viewpoint also governed the way in which some outsiders made sense of their experience at the institution. This was evident in a vivid description given by an attendee to the convocation ceremony of the university in 1830:

> Upon the whole, however, this was not a very imposing spectacle – there was no effort at grandeur or magnificence – no false glare or mere show – not attempt to dazzle and delude the public; the ceremony brought home to the breasts of the spectators this important truth, that the place where they sat was an institution of great practical utility, and possessing every facility of imparting sound knowledge, and a beneficial professional education.[544]

This contrast between utility and ornament was also embodied in the academic structure of the new university. In listing some of the courses offered by the university, one of the earliest official publications classified Italian language, Spanish Literature, German and Northern Literature, Geology and Botany as subjects that 'may be considered more in the light of ornamental accomplishments'; while subjects like Greek Language, Roman Language, Political Economy, and Natural Philosophy were those that 'constitute the essential parts of a general liberal education'. Courses such as engineering, medicine and law were categorised under 'professional education'.[545] This classification might seem incompatible with the divide between utility and ornament, as there were three categories, ornamental, liberal and professional; and the inclusion of 'liberal education' seems to contradict

[543] 'On Education', *The London University Magazine*, 1 (London, 1829), 291.
[544] J.W. 'London University', *Dublin Literary Gazette*, 22 (May 22, 1830), 331.
[545] *Statement by the Council of the University of London, Explanatory of the Nature and Objects of the Institution* (London, 1827), 11.

our claim that the spirit of the university was out of step with the traditional ethos of the time.

However, by looking at the genesis of this classification it becomes clear that they actually developed out of a framework based on utility and ornament. Those subjects that fell under liberal and professional categories were the first to be chosen by the Education Committee in their meeting on 22 November 1826. At this point, however, they did not use the label 'liberal' or 'professional'; rather they were simply thought of 'as the most immediately necessary'. Those that fell under ornamental accomplishments, however, were only suggested later by the Council, when they asked the Education Committee to consider 'the expediency of appointing in the first instance Professor of Modern Languages & Literature'.[546] The meeting of the Education Committee five days later resolved that 'provided there be room for one class in the basement professors be appointed to teach the French Language & Literature, Italian & Spanish Languages & Literature, and German & Northern Languages & Literature'.[547] Therefore, the ornamental here referred to those subjects that were not regarded as 'immediately necessary' and which were thus less of a priority.

However, when reproduced in the official *Statement by the Council*, subjects that were considered 'immediately necessary' were broken down into liberal and professional, and the rest into ornamental accomplishments. The formation of the category liberal education here was not based on the criteria of liberal education used in the traditional discourse that promoted only mathematics and classics. It is

[546] University College London, Council Minutes, 'Thirtieth Session of the Council, 16 December 1826', 44.
[547] University College London, Miscellaneous Committee Minutes 1826-1827, 'Education Committee, 20 December 1826', 45.

hard to understand by the standards of the time why, for instance, political economy and classics were both included in the category of liberal education. Besides, the category 'liberal education' in this *Statement* was not a privileged category at all and lacked normative status. It did not imply a noble or a more respectable education. In fact, as a whole, the tripartite classification tells us nothing about the normative status of these categories; rather they appeared to be purely descriptive. Only by referring back to the genesis of this structure during the meetings of the Education Committee can one see that the paradigm that governed the normative relations between subjects was based on the distinction between 'immediately necessary' and 'ornament'.

The primacy of this binary outlook in the academic attitude of the Council is further reflected in the professors' salaries. It was proposed that the professors of subjects considered 'immediately necessary' should receive a salary of between £200 and £300 per annum[548], but that those of 'ornamental accomplishments' should not receive any salary. Such professors were expected to rely on students' fees.[549] Even later, when the Council agreed to guarantee some amount of remuneration for them, it did not put the issue of their unequal status to rest. Writing as 'A Proprietor' the warden himself, Horner, publicly criticised the emolument guaranteed for the professors of ornamental subjects which if continued, he believed, 'would be a misappropriation of the University Funds'.[550] Upon learning that the letter was written by Horner, the professor of German, Ludwig Mühlenfels expressed his outrage to the Council. He observed that, 'by the withdrawal of such emoluments for the reasons given by the warden' the professors of modern languages would be

[548] 'Education Committee 24 November 1826', 45.
[549] 'Education Committee, 20 December 1826', 45.
[550] A Proprietor, 'University of London', *The Sun*, April 22; 11, 734.

regarded 'as inferior men to their brother professors.'[551] So far we have seen the presence of utilitarian sensibility in the foundation of the London University as reflected in the use of the evaluative language of utility by its members and supporters, the application of the binary utility and ornament, and its embodiment in the academic structure of the institution. Next we will show how the presence of the sentiment was further confirmed by numerous contemporary critiques of the institution that portrayed it as utilitarian.

The Critical Portrayal of London University as a Utilitarian Institution

Historians have paid some attention to the critiques of the university, but have little to say about the focus of such attacks on its utilitarian character. This is probably because they generally understand the contemporary sense of being utilitarian in a Benthamite sense. By such thinking, a contemporary critique that alleged the university was founded by 'money-getting, utilitarian people'[552] looks simply like a misrepresentation of utilitarianism. However, given that the word 'utilitarian' could also be understood in terms of everyday-sense utility, it could be argued that such a critical portrayal actually reflected the contemporary awareness that the university was an institutional representation of utilitarian sensibility. We may begin with a sermon delivered at Cambridge by the Vicar of Horsham, Hugh James Rose, in July 1826 entitled *The Tendency of the Prevalent Opinions about Knowledge Considered*. Historians have tended to read this piece primarily as a critique of

[551] University College London, College Correspondence, UCC/P330, Ludwig Mühlenfels to [Council], May 8, 1830.
[552] 'Modern Systems of Instruction', *British Critic,* 1:1 (Jan., 1827.), 205.

Paleyan rationalism in theology and an attempt to call for the establishment of an Anglican university in London.[553]

However, they have paid less attention to its attack on 'utility' as an evaluative criterion for knowledge and education. One of the most repeated phrases in the sermon was 'immediate utility'. Rose saw this as the defining characteristic of the educational culture of the university. By 'immediate utility', Rose was referring to the lower and sensual aspects of life as opposed to the higher and spiritual attributes.[554] For him, whenever a man is obsessed with wealth and material gains, knowledge will also be tailored to ensure their increase, thus 'the only object [of knowledge] is its immediate utility, and the return which will it make'.[555] Rose further maintains that 'the standard of that knowledge, which has immediate utility and present reward for its object will obviously be public opinion'.[556] He saw periodicals as the main driver of public opinion in his day, and blamed them for corrupting the understanding of knowledge and education. According to Rose, whoever reads the leading periodicals or publications of the day 'is aware that they unquestionably speak of intellect, its improvements, and its progress, in the same language which they apply to any other commodity within the sphere of political economy'.[557] It was very likely that what he had in mind here periodicals like the

[553] For instance, David A. Valone regards it as an attack on the Cambridge system of education, especially on the rational tendency in religious understanding as evident in the influence of Paleyan thought on its curriculum. David A. Valone, 'Hugh James Rose's Anglican Critique of Cambridge: Science, Antirationalism, and Coleridgean Idealism in Late Georgian England', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 33:2 (Summer, 2001), 218-242. Meanwhile, historian Alan Bacon sees it as arguing for an Anglican university in London as a competitor to the newly established London University. Alan Bacon, 'English Literature becomes a Subject: King's College London as Pioneer', *Victorian Studies*, 29:4, (Summer 1986), 591-612.
[554] Hugh James Rose, *The Tendency of Prevalent Opinions About Knowledge Considered: A Sermon Before the University of Cambridge on Commencement Sunday, July 1826* (Cambridge, 1826), 2.
[555] Ibid., 4-5.
[556] Ibid., 8.
[557]Ibid., 13.

Edinburgh Review and *Westminster Review*, since they were not only at the forefront of promoting popular education, but they also revered political economy. Reference to these periodicals as the sources of the problem in 1826 had a wider significance since those who were closely associated with these periodicals, like Brougham and Mill, were at the same time working on the foundation of the London University. Furthermore, as the literary voice of Whigs and utilitarians, both periodicals also engaged with the Tory and Romantic critical reviews of the foundation.[558] Hence, Rose's charge that they were the main cause of the problem needs to be understood in the context of the foundation of the university since it was the major educational issue with which the periodicals were preoccupied at that moment.

Although Rose made no explicit reference to the London University, some contemporaries did read his sermon as a manifesto against the institution. A review in the *British Critic* published in January 1827 saw the sermon as a reflection on the numerous newly founded institutions formed in the name of popular education. Among them were the Mechanics' Institutes and especially the London University. For him the emergence of these institutions and the spirit that sustained them confirmed Rose's observation that knowledge is no more valued for its own sake, but rather for its immediate utility. When discussing the London University, the reviewer talked about the relationship between the institution and four individuals, namely, Bentham, Mill, Brougham and Campbell. Unlike Campbell and Brougham, Bentham and Mill were presented as ideologues whose views on education were

[558] As early as August 1825, the *Edinburgh Review* provided a defence of the project in an article entitled, 'New University in London'. In the *Westminster Review*, though there was no specific article that was written on the subject, we find the project was endorsed by James Mill in 'State of The Nation' published in October 1826.

central to the underlying ideological foundation of the institution. The reviewer claimed that 'in many respects relating both to the form and the spirit, the *Chrestomathic* Day School of Mr. Bentham is the exact prototype and counterpart of the London University of Messrs. Brougham and Campbell.'[559] He saw *Chrestomathia* as the 'holy book' that defines the educational ethos of the institution. He also discussed Mill's famous *Essay on Education* and highlighted his membership of the Council of the university. Among the points that the reviewer raised about Mill's essay were its praise for Bentham's *Chrestomathia*, its critique of the existing educational system and its call for the establishment of the new system. The reviewer commented that several years after the publication of the essay, 'the rage for new plans and establishments of education increased with an accelerated ratio. In lectures, in pamphlets, in letters addressed of different journals, projects were proposed for building a grand place of comprehensive instruction in London'.[560] This is a clear indication that the reviewer wanted his readers to see the educational writings of Bentham and Mill as the catalyst for the foundation of the London University.

But a careful reading of the review would suggest that in referring to the educational ideas of Bentham and Mill, the reviewer was actually using them as a representation of what Rose's sermon had considered as the core element of the prevalent opinions about knowledge, that is, its preoccupation with 'immediate utility'. For instance, among the only things that he highlighted about *Chrestomathia* was the proposal for a new science of pest control, which Bentham termed *Pthisozoics*. The reviewer mockingly observed that, 'to become a *complete vermin-killer*, a destroyer of rats

[559] 'Modern Systems of Instruction', *British Critic*, 1:1 (Jan. 1827), 188.
[560] Ibid., 189-190.

and bugs, is deemed a more valuable acquisition for a youth, than to be a proficient in moral and religious knowledge'.[561] This example echoes Rose's assertion that the mundane and the sensual always divert us from the spiritual and higher truth. Thus, the reviewer portrayed *Chrestomathia* merely as a manifestation of the prevailing obsession with 'immediate utility'. Furthermore, the reviewer's point about Mill's praise of *Chrestomathia* was itself made in order to show that Mill's work was part of Bentham's project, which, he alleged, was marked by its reverence for immediate utility. Mill did indeed praise Bentham's plan in the *Essay on Education*, but it received very little attention. Under Mill's scheme of education, *Chrestomathia* fell into the category of what he termed 'Technical Education'.[562] He just touched on *Chrestomathia* in passing while discussing this category.[563] The reviewer's highlighting of the praise, therefore, was simply an attempt to conceal differences between the two works in order to emphasise the obsession with 'immediate utility'.

The association between utility and the new university was also apparent in contemporary satirical pieces. For instance, an essay published in August 1826 told a story of a (fictitious) character named Jerry Button, who started his career as a tailor, but then through independent learning rose up to become a 'professor of utility' in the London University, and a regular contributor to the *Tombuctoo Review*. The narrator told readers about his encounter with Jerry Button. Once, the professor asked him, 'Why, sir, of what utility is Greek literature – what has it done

[561] Ibid.
[562] By 'Technical Education' Mill meant what we now understand as education in its institutional and formal sense, like school education and university education. Besides 'Technical Education', he also talked about 'Domestic Education', 'Social Education' and 'Political Education'. Mill's categorization makes sense if we understand it in terms of his broad definition of education as 'Everything from the first germ of existence to the final extinction of life, which operates in such a manner as to affect those qualities of the mind on which happiness in any degree depends.' James Mill, 'Education', in Terence Ball (ed.) *James Mill: Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1992), 182.
[563] Ibid., 186.

and can it do? Can it invent steam-engines, fill balloons, dig mines, fatten pigs, level mountains, make puddings, cut out small pox?'[564] When the narrator pointed out that, 'you seem altogether to overlook imagination in your system', Jerry replied that, 'There is no utility in imagination, it is a large painted lie drawn upon nothing …. Take your imagination to Smithfield, what will it fetch there?'[565] At the end Jerry proudly affirmed that 'We are all directing our talents to the one object of Utility, and whenever we observe anything of which we do not know the use, we write against it in the *Tombuctoo*, and we will lecture against it in the New University.'[566] As J.R. Dinwiddy notes, the nickname 'Jerry' was normally used by Romantics like Southey as a ridicule of Bentham,[567] while the *Tombuctoo Review* here referred to the organ of the utilitarians, the *Westminster Review*. The 'tailor' was clearly Francis Place, a well-known disciple and friend of Bentham. Place featured in the narrative because he had recently been praised by Campbell as one of the best examples of a person from a humble background who had reached a respectable status as a result of tireless learning, despite being immersed at the same time in his daily business.[568] The use of a fictitious academic position such as the 'professor of utility' also personified the defining characteristic of the new institution. Hence, this sarcasm combined symbolic elements that bound utilitarians

[564] R.S.T, 'Memorabilia of Jerry, My Tailor', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 20:115 (Aug. 1826), 189-190.
[565] Ibid.
[566] Ibid., 191.
[567] In his letter to Henry Taylor dated 31 December 1825, Robert Southey called the *Westminster Review* the 'Jerry-bedlamite review'. Elsewhere he spoke of 'Jerrysprudence' in reference to Bentham's jurisprudence. J.R. Dinwiddy, 'Early-Nineteenth-Century Reactions to Benthamism', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 34 (1984), 48.
[568] Thomas Campbell, 'Proposal of a Metropolitan University, in a Letter to Henry Brougham', *The Times*, February 9, 1825, 4. From *The Life of Francis Place*, written by Graham Wallas, we know that Place thought he did not deserve such a compliment from Campbell. Later, he sent Campbell a long private letter that described the limits of his knowledge on subjects such as political economy, metaphysics and law. Interestingly, he thought of himself as someone who was good at influencing or governing others rather than as an intellectual. Graham Wallas, *The Life of Francis Place 1771-1854* (London, 1918) 193.

and the London University into a meaningful whole, whose underlying unity was utility.

This same theme was present in another satirical piece, *The First Book for the Instruction of Students in the King's College* (1831). In a section called *King's College Dictionary*, some figures associated with the London University were sarcastically defined. For instance, George Birkbeck was described as 'a knowledge-generating steam engine of 40 parson power, very dangerous',[569] and Bentham as 'A gas lighter to the Imperial Company' which 'Emits an offensive effluvia'.[570] This use of metaphors of machinery and mechanism suggest that those figures symbolically represented what Rose called the obsession with the sensual and material. Indeed, far from misrepresenting the university, these critical sermons and essays were actually highlighting utility as its cultural underpinning.

This chapter has demonstrated that the ethos of the London University embodied the newly emerging utilitarian sensibility that was incompatible with the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education at the time. This demonstration also involves a radical revision of a subject familiar to the history of the London University. Unlike previous studies, it provided a historical and conceptual explanation for the utilitarian character of the London University based on the ordinary rather than philosophical meaning of utility. By doing this, this chapter not only resolves the question of the utilitarian nature of the institution, but also provides a new historical framework to explain the old assumption that the emphasis on utility in education was antagonistic to the spirit of liberal education. The

[569] *First Book for the Instruction of Students in the King's College. By Order of a Committee* (London, c.1831), 22.
[570] Ibid.

argument of this chapter completes our discussion of the relationship between the London University and traditional liberal education. It is now clear that the middle-class character of the institution, its attitude towards medical education, and the utilitarian sensibility that it embodied, were all manifestations of its hostile attitude to different aspects of the traditional sense of being liberal. Based on these new insights, we shall in the next chapter whether the rival establishment, King's College London shared this attitude towards liberal education.

Chapter Six

Reinterpreting the Significance of the Establishment of King's College London

In the previous chapters we have seen how, through its middle-class, professional and utilitarian character, the London University represented a significant break from the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education. This study, however, will be incomplete if we do not use these insights to explore whether the establishment of its rival institution, King's College London shared with the London University the socio-cultural assumptions that were incompatible with traditional liberal education. It begins with a brief history of the establishment of the college, which suggests that just as with the London University, the question of its relationship to liberal education still remains unanswered. The chapter then argues that although King's College London, in comparison to the Gower-Street university, had a closer relationship with the ancient universities that promoted liberal education, and the mood surrounding its establishment was more appreciative of the sense of being liberal, it could not in practice generate a sense of attachment to the socio-cultural assumptions of the old educational ethos. This was mainly due to the middle-class and metropolitan character of the college that not only required the institution to respond to the demand for a professional and practical kind of education, but also meant that some of its members and supporters viewed the significance of its foundation in socio-economic terms.

The Foundation of King's College London and Liberal Education

While historians of the London University unanimously agree on the role of Thomas Campbell as its original founder, there is disagreement among scholars about the

origins of King's College London. According to Fossey Hearnshaw, it was George D'Oyly, an Anglican cleric and theologian, who first proposed the idea. This attribution was based on his letter to Robert Peel under the pseudonym *Christianus* in February 1828 which identified the need for an Anglican institution in London as a remedy to the establishment of the godless Gower-Street university.[571] Gordon Huelin, on the other hand, suggests that the idea of its creation originated much earlier, in a sermon by Hugh James Rose at Cambridge in October 1826. As we saw in the last chapter, that sermon made no direct mention of the need for an Anglican college in the metropolis. Huelin's suggestion relies on the fact that its message was later taken up by a reviewer in the *British Critic* and used as a critique of the London University.[572] It is not the concern of this chapter to answer this question. What we do know for sure is that the actual establishment commenced on 21 June 1828 when a group of eminent gentlemen held a meeting at the Freemasons' Tavern to consider the possibility of founding a new educational institution in London.

Chaired by the Duke of Wellington, the meeting resolved that 'a College for General Education be founded in the metropolis' where 'the various branches of Literature and Science are made the subjects of instruction' and which would 'imbue the minds of youth with a knowledge of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, as inculcated by the United Church of England and Ireland.'[573] In that meeting, 27 men were appointed as a provisional committee. Among these members were the Tory politician Robert Inglis; the President of the Royal College of Physicians, Henry Halford; the Bishop of Llandaff, Edward Copleston and D'Oyly

[571] F.J.C Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London 1828-1928* (London, 1929), 37.
[572] Gordon Huelin, *King's College London 1828-1978* (London, 1978), 2.
[573] King's College London Council Minutes Book, KA/C/M1 (hereafter 'Council Minutes'), 'General Meeting Saturday 21 June 1828'.

himself. Henry Nelson Coleridge, the nephew and son in law of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was appointed as the secretary of the committee.[574] The committee agreed that the college would offer religious instruction and subjects including classics, modern languages, natural philosophy, medicine and jurisprudence so as to serve 'the two great objects of Education, [which were] the communication of General Knowledge and specific preparations for particular professions'.[575] Later, several sites were proposed for the location of the college, including Regent's Park and Buckingham Palace, until it was finally decided that it should occupy the ground next to Somerset House.

In 1830 the list of the members of the first council for the college was published in *The Charter and Laws of King's College London* which included many of those who were previously part of the provisional committee.[576] The official opening of the college, however, did not take place until 8 October 1831. In terms of its organisational structure King's differed slightly from the London University. First, the institution had a Visitor, a position that was held by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Second, it also had nine perpetual governors among whom were the Lord High Chancellor, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London, who were appointed solely by virtue of their offices; and eight life governors who were mostly aristocrats such as the Duke of Rutland, the Duke of Wellington and the Marquess of Bute.[577] These Governors, a treasurer and 24 other members of the institution constituted the Council of King's College, London. The Archbishop of York, according to the Charter, shall preside as chairman at every meeting of the council, or 'in case of his absence or declining to take the chair, the Bishop of

[574] Ibid.
[575] Ibid.
[576] *The Charter and By-Laws of King's College, London* (London, 1830), 9 -10.
[577]Ibid., 7 – 8.

London'.[578] As in the case of the Council of the London University, this council for King's College was invested with the authority and power to make decisions on both administrative and academic affairs of the college, including appointing and removing its members. Between the council and the teaching body stood the principal who managed the day-to-day affairs of the college. This position was thus equivalent to the role of the warden at the Gower-Street institution. William Otter, who was the husband of the sister of D'Oyly's wife, was appointed to this position and held it until 1836.[579]

King's was not initially intended to be a university, i.e., a degree-granting institution. This explains why, unlike its Gower-Street counterpart, the institution adopted the title college. The academic structure of King's College London was made up of two main components, the Senior Department and the Junior Department. The latter was basically an elementary school, while the former was the higher learning institution, only admitting students aged 16 and older. Indeed, as it specifically concerns the comparison between the college and the London University this chapter only focuses on the Senior Department. There were basically two types of students admitted to the institution, regular and occasional, which is equivalent to full-time and part-time. King's College London, despite its Anglican character, admitted students from all denominational and religious backgrounds, but what made it different from the London University was that all regular students were required to attend the daily service in the chapel, and a weekly lecture on divinity.[580] This was in line with the original intention of the founders, namely, to make religious instruction central to the educational scheme of the college. This

[578] Ibid., 10.
[579] Arthur Burns, 'Otter, William (1768–1840)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20935, accessed 3 April 2015].
[580] Huelin, *King's College London*, 5.

aspect of the college has been explored in the historical literature. One of the issues that remains to be addressed however is, whether or not this foundation, like that of the London University, reflected a historically significant shift in attitude towards what constituted liberal education at the time?

Generally, historians have little to say on the subject, as they primarily conceive the significance of the establishment merely in terms of the struggle between Anglicanism and secularism.[581] Therefore, it is the main aim of this chapter to examine the significance of this establishment in the context of the challenges to the socio-cultural status of liberal education. As we shall see, in comparison to the London University, the relation between King's College London and liberal education was much more complex. This is primarily because in its early years, the institution experienced the contradiction between, on the one hand, the ideological make up of its founders and council members that generally subscribed to the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education and the ethos of the ancient institutions including Oxbridge and the Royal College of Physicians; and, on the other, the reality of being a middle-class and metropolitan institution that needs to meet the professional and practical demands of its students.

King's College London and the Continuity of Tradition

Earlier we saw how some critics of the London University considered the establishment of the institution to be an attempt to challenge the privileged position

[581] Robert Anderson, *British Universities: Past and Present* (London, 2006), 27; R.D. Anderson, *Universities and Elites in Britain since 1800* (Cambridge, 1995), 5; Gillian Sutherland, 'Education', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.) *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750 -1950*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1990), iii. 139.

of the ancient universities. This sentiment, as we have made clear, arose partly from the awareness that many of the founders and council members of the institution were educated at Scottish universities. Because of this, from the very beginning there was an apparent rupture between the image of the Gower-Street university and that of its English predecessors. King's College London, however, had a close relationship with the ancient universities. Unlike the London University, most of the founders and council members of the institution had received their education at either Oxford or Cambridge, and some had even been fellows and heads of colleges. Prominent members of the council like Edward Copleston, Robert Inglis and Henry Halford were graduates of Oxford, while Otter was an alumnus of Jesus College, Cambridge.

The relationship with the ancient universities was also embodied in the rules and regulations of the college. For example, the council agreed that the principal 'must be a clergyman, having the degree of M.A., at least in one of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin'.[582] Although Dublin was included here on religious or theological grounds, candidates from the ancient universities, due to their greater reputation and connection, were always preferred. This can be seen from the simple fact that until 1975, all its principals were either Cambridge or Oxford graduates. It is no exaggeration, indeed, to suggest, that in the early stages of the foundation, the top members of the ancient universities were treated like informal supervisors of the project. Their agreement on some core issues seemed indispensable. One thing they wanted to make sure of was that the policy of the new college would not contradict their interests. Hence, after the first draft of the Charter of King's College London was completed, a council member was instructed by the governing body to send it to

[582] Council Minutes, 'Details respecting the Plan for conducting the College, 30 Dec 1828', 51.

the ‘members of the Board of Head of Houses and Proctors’ of Oxford which upon inspection concluded that ‘it did not appear to them to contain anything which could affect the interests of the University.’[583]

As well as maintaining a strong connection with the ancient universities, King’s College London had a close relationship with the Royal College of Physicians. For one thing, its president, Halford, played a prominent role in the foundation of the college. The secondary literature does not really touch on the significance of Halford’s involvement in the project, and the article about him in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography does not even mention it.[584] In the context of this discussion, however, the fact of his participation in the project is important. Since Halford was the embodiment of the traditional ideology in medicine, it suggests that the ideological influence that was operating behind the genesis of the medical school at King’s College London was different from the one at the London University, represented by Birkbeck and others. Hence, when Robert Inglis expressed his pride that the college received support from the ‘Gentlemen of the highest character’ in the medical profession, he was alluding to the connection that the institution had with the powerful and traditional medical establishment.[585] The central role of Halford in the formation of the medical school is evident. Alongside A.P Cooper and B.C Broodie, both of whom were reputable surgeons, he was entrusted ‘to report to the council as to the number and duties of the Professors,

[583] Council Minutes, ‘The 25th Meeting of the Provisional Committee, Thursday 26th March 1829’.
[584] G. T. Bettany, ‘Halford , Sir Henry, first baronet (1766–1844)’, rev. Michael Bevan, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11919, accessed 3 April 2015].
[585] ‘King’s College London’, *Morning Post*, Monday, May 18, 1829.

whom it will be expedient to appoint for carrying on the cause of Medical education in the College'.[586]

In his personal capacity, Halford managed to enrich the early collections of the school with 'his Cabinet of Materia Medica together with a catalogue of its contents scientifically arranged',[587] and through his close connection with the King, he 'communicated the gift from His Majesty of a complete anatomical figure … for the use of the anatomical school'.[588] Halford's influence at the King's College London medical school also reflected the nature of his power at the Royal College of Physicians. For instance, through his influence, he managed to secure a professorship of medicine for Francis Hawkins, the husband of his niece.[589] Just two years later, in his capacity as the President of the Royal College, Halford ensured the selection of Hawkins as a fellow of the institution. In a satirical tone *The Lancet* reported that 'Dr. Hawkins, Professor in Strand-lane College', was proposed 'by his distinguished uncle Sir Henry Humbug', and after 'the ballot went round, the chairman examined the boxes, and with his usual suavity of manner congratulated the club on the election of Dr. Hawkins !!'[590] No doubt, it was partly due to this kind of connection that medical reformers were more critical of King's College London than they were of the London University. *The Lancet* even questioned the selection of the Strand for the location of the medical school, as 'It is not situated conveniently for the observances of any hospital practice.' It maintained that the choice of 'such a site savours strongly of the system' that was more concerned with

[586] Council Minutes, 'Meeting of the Council, Tuesday 15 December 1829'.
[587] Council Minutes, 'Meeting of the Council, Friday 26 November 1830'.
[588] Council Minutes, 'Meeting of the Council, Friday 10 February 1832'.
[589] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/H3, Henry Halford to Henry Smith, July 13, 1830.
[590] 'Sir Henry Halford Again. Caution to Balloters', *Lancet*, 1:479 (November 3, 1832), 189.

granting licenses and certificates than 'the possession of medical knowledge'.[591] The attitude of King's College London towards the reformist periodical was also clear, as there was 'an order of the council which prohibits the insertion of our advertisements in *The Lancet'*.[592]

Despite its apparent connection with the ancient institutions, it is wrong to assume that the founders and supporters of King's intended it to be an Oxbridge on the Strand. As the critics of the London University generally refused to acknowledge its claim to the title of 'university', it was natural for them to expect the Anglican alternative to match its supposed lower status. The adoption of the title 'College' suggested that, unlike the London University, King's College London was not meant to be an equal alternative to the old universities, but an inferior member of the same family that shared the same commitment to preserving the hegemony of the established Church. However, despite this inferiority, in comparison to those of the London University, the founders of King's set a higher value on the traditional sense of being liberal. The initial atmosphere of the foundation, for instance, reflected a sensitivity to status hierarchy. This can be seen in the deferential language used when describing the very first meeting of the founders, which reflected a sense of reverence for aristocratic leadership. *The Standard*, for example, described the gathering as the 'meeting of the most distinguished nobility and gentry', [593] while *The Morning Post* referred to it as 'a meeting, extraordinary from the high character and rank of a great number of the Persons present.'[594] Even the Duke of Wellington himself, who chaired the session, could not but express his

[591] 'King's College', *Lancet* 1:526 (September 28, 1833), 14 -15.
[592] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/O7, William Otter to Henry Smith, September 9, 1834.
[593] 'New London University', *Standard*, Saturday June 21, 1828.
[594] 'The King's College, London', *Morning Post*, Monday June 23, 1828.

confidence in the prospect of the enterprise after looking 'at the rank and affluence that surrounded him – individuals not only possessing the means but whose hearts were warm in the cause (Loud cheers)'. Among them were of course those 'who held the highest and most dignified situations in the established church.'[595] The end of the meeting was narrated in the following words: 'the company, which for rank and respectability, was the most distinguished it has ever been our good to meet, then separated'.[596] This aristocratic public image of the foundation suggests that, although the organization was not meant for the members from the upper ranks, the institution was conceived within an atmosphere where the superior qualities of that class were affirmed. Obviously, among the founders of the college, there was no one like James Mill from the London University who justified the significance of their educational enterprise in terms of the potential of the middle-classes.

The appreciation of the meaning of being liberal was also reflected in several regulations of the college. Since well-known figures such as Copleston and Halford were appointed to the committees for 'Education and Internal Regulations' – whose duties involved designing the curriculum and electing professors for each subject – we can see some efforts to emulate practices that were integral to liberal education in the ancient universities.[597] For instance, this committee proposed that 'the Students in the Senior Department wear Academical Gowns, whilst attending the Lectures'.[598] Wearing gowns, as we have seen earlier, was a customary practice at Oxford and Cambridge and one of the key symbols of status hierarchy and social order in collegiate life. It was also instrumental in reinforcing the sense of being

[595] 'New London University', *Standard*, Saturday June 21, 1828.
[596] Ibid.
[597] *The Charter and By-Laws of King's College London*, 10; Council Minutes, 'Meeting of the Council, September 1, 1829'.
[598] Council Minutes, 'Meeting of the Council, Saturday 1st October 1831'.

liberal, enabling students to feel the relevance of liberal education in their everyday practice. It is clear that the Council of King's College London did not follow the move of its counterpart on Gower Street of rejecting such a proposal outright. They accepted it and recommended the practice for the regular students as a privilege that distinguished them from the occasional ones.[599]

In academic matters there were efforts to make liberal education the core focus of education at the college. For instance, at the medical school there was a call for liberal education to be made compulsory for medical students. According to one writer, 'Classical & Mathematical attainments & moral & religious instruction would necessarily be made part of the scheme of discipline required to qualify students to graduate in medicine at King's College'. He saw a strong correlation between the advancement of medical science and the acquisition of liberal education: 'the practical art of medicine would it is presumable keep pace in improvement with the improved general education of its Professors.' In line with the traditional outlook, the writer also believed that an ideal medical practitioner should cultivate the persona of a gentleman-scholar. He reminded readers that 'The two most eminent men in medicine since the revival of letters, & who have the most contributed to its advancement', Vesalius and Harvey, 'were accomplished scholars, before they commenced medical studies'.[600] As seen in one of the previous chapters, it was based on this view that Halford justified the priority given to the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge in the selection of fellows at the Royal College of Physicians.

[599] *King's College London. Medical Department* (London, 1833), 3.
[600] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/1C/M8, 'Did King's College London Confer Degrees in Medicine?' c.1835.

This attachment to liberal education is understandable, given the commitment of its founders to the ethos of the ancient universities. The question that remains, however, is how entrenched these elements were in the institutional make-up of King's College London, and to what extent they were truly able to generate an institutional atmosphere that could nourish a long-lasting sense of reverence for liberal education. It is argued here that although the founders of King's College London were more attached to the ideals of liberal education than the founders of the London University, the middle-class and metropolitan character of the institution hindered the formation of an institutional ethos that could be based on a sense of respect for the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education. These characteristics, were the unintended consequences of the reactionary nature of the establishment. As one author noted, 'The views and spirit of this College are purely and strictly defensive.'[601] The founders were not really motivated by a desire to promote the diffusion of education, rather it was mainly because they 'found it in action; they saw, with just alarm, what might be its effects' that they 'proceeded, without delay, to provide such guards and remedies, as were left in their power'.[602] Even the crucial question of the suitability of the metropolis as a location for an academic institution was never properly considered, as the decision was mainly based on the need to rival an ideologically dangerous institution which happened to be in London. In other words, 'the Committee had no choice …. It had been decided for them by others'.[603] But the reactionary motive for the establishment inevitably generated some unforeseen outcomes, and features that could not be defined in

[601] A Subscriber, *Remarks on the Objects of Public Education Respectfully Addressed to the Provisional Committee for Conducting the Intended Establishment of King's College London* (London, 1828), 8.
[602] Ibid., 10 – 11.
[603] Ibid., f11.

terms of the Anglican sentiment. The metropolitan and middle-class character of the college was the most obvious outcome of these elements.

Their influence, as we shall see, was manifested in the evolution of peculiar structural and curricular features that were very similar to those at the London University. Indeed, if we put aside its Anglican features, the college looks very much like its Gower-Street counterpart as representative of new trends in English university education. For instance, Gordon Roderick and Michael Stephens credited both institutions 'for pioneering the physical sciences and engineering', which set them apart, in curricular terms, from the ancient universities.[604] This means that if we are to emphasise the role of the metropolitan and middle-class character of the College in constituting the core fabric of the institutional experience of the college, it is important for us to have an alternative account of its early relationship with the London University. In the current historical literature, it is usually assumed that the relations between the two institutions were initially hostile, and only began to improve in 1835 when they desperately needed to cooperate in fighting for the right to grant medical degrees.[605] This picture has arisen from the tendency of overstressing the reactionary and Anglican dimensions of the establishment. With regards to the question asked in this chapter, this view hinders us from seriously considering the possibility of a shared experience between the two institutions. It thus needs to be revised. Contrary to the common assumptions, it is argued here that even in the early stages of the foundation, not only did some contemporaries realise the similarities and the prospect for unity between King's College London and the London University, but both institutions also had already communicated about

[604] Gordon Wynne Roderick and Michael Dawson Stephens, *Education and Industry in the Nineteenth Century: the English Disease?* (London, 1978), 97.
[605] Huelin, *King's College London*, 14; Hearnshaw, *Centenary History of King's*, 121.

matters of shared interest. Basically, this suggests that, although one should not underestimate the genuineness and forcefulness of the reactionary Anglican sentiment that underpinned the establishment of the college, it is also a mistake to see its early relationship with the London University as characterised solely by hostility. Being a Christian college did not necessarily mean that the institution, its members and supporters were completely shut off from the possibility of identifying themselves with interests that were unrelated to the Anglicanism.

The Early Case for a Merger between King's College London and the London University

Just two weeks after the first meeting of the provisional committee for the establishment of King's College London, an observer under the pseudonym *Civis* wrote in *The Times* that 'A report has prevailed for the last few days, that a coalition between the University of London and the King's College is contemplated'. Coalition, for *Civis,* was a highly reasonable option as it appeared to him that the model of the projected King's College London had 'become in all its details a copy of that of the 'University''. Due to this similarity, it was considered desirable for the new college to imitate the design and policies of the London University. As he maintained, putting aside their distinct emphasis on religious instruction, 'what is left for the council of the King's College except to send to Gower Street for "the rules and regulations of the University of London" and to follow them in their own institution'. He concluded by calling for the merger of both institutions, and as if anticipating the federation that brought them together in 1836, suggested that 'The one to be called King's College, and the other University College, both together

being denominated the University of London'.[606] Three months later, the same view was echoed in *The Lancet*, where a contributor claimed that 'The Plan of the King's College is, in all respects, save the introduction of a compulsory system of religious instruction … [was] a copy of that of the London University.' He then expressed his belief that although 'The patrons of each may, for a while, take opposite directions', they would one day 'arrive at the same point.'[607] It is clear, then, that since the beginning days of the college, contemporaries were very much aware of and applauded the common features of the two institutions and firmly believed that they would one day be united under 'one grand scheme of education.'[608]

However, it was not just external observers who noticed the similarities between the two institutions, for the administrative and official behaviour of their members also seemed to reflect the same affinity. From early formal correspondence between King's College London and the London University, we can see that they were on friendlier terms than is usually observed in the historical literature. Immediately after its opening, the London University sent 'the members of King's College committee some Tickets of admission to the introductory lectures of the Professors in the University of London', and politely told them to let the university know if they 'wish to have more'.[609] In 1829, when both institutions were in their crucial formative phase, they started to communicate upon fundamental matters of shared interest, the most important of which was the drafting of the charter. If there was anything that provided a comprehensive outline of an institution, it was the charter. Yet, despite the supposed antagonism between King's College London and the

[606] Civis, 'The New Universities', *The Times*, Wednesday July 9, 1828, 3.
[607] 'London University', *Lancet,* 2:265 (September 27, 1828), 822.
[608] 'London University and King's College', *Athenaeum,* 51 (Oct. 15, 1828), 799
[609] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/H1, Leonard Horner to Henry Nelson Coleridge, September 19, 1828.

London University, their members were clearly convinced that the same charter could work for the other. In May 1829, Leonard Horner, under the instruction of the Council of the London University, applied to the committee of King's College London for a copy of their charter.[610] The committee promised to send a copy to the London University when it was ready,[611] and managed to fulfil that promise in September of that year.[612] For their part, King's College London also asked the London University to send a copy of its charter when it was prepared.[613]

There were several factors that helped to ease the tension between the two London institutions. One of the earliest, perhaps, was the waning influence of the High-Tory elements at King's College London since the first months of 1829. Many High-Tories, the Earl of Winchelsea being the most notable, saw the Duke of Wellington's passing of the Catholic Relief Act as a betrayal of the long-held supremacy of the established Church. This had a direct impact on King's College London, as Wellington was one of its most influential governors. The Earl and many others withdrew their subscriptions to the college as they began to doubt its commitment to the Church.[614] A gentleman named Quintin Dick justified his withdrawal by claiming that Wellington and other founders had totally changed the original plan of the college. He therefore decided to 'separate myself from an institution which they patronize, apprehensive that the contagion of their example might infuse itself into a college, over which they are intended to preside'.[615] In his

[610] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/H2, Leonard Horner to Henry Nelson Coleridge, May 26, 1829,
[611] Council Minutes, '31st Meeting of the Provisional Committee, Thursday 16 June 1829'.
[612] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/H2, Thomas Coates to Henry Smith, September 7, 1829.
[613] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/H4, Leonard Horner to Henry Smith, January 12, 1831.
[614] Council Minutes, '27th Meeting of the Provisional Committee Called by Special Notice Wednesday, 22 April 1829'.
[615] Quintin Dick, 'To H.N. Coleridge ESQ.', *Standard*, Tuesday, April 7, 1829, 6.

letter to the secretary of the institution, Winchelsea claimed that Wellington, 'under the cloak of some coloured show of zeal for the Protestant religion, carried on an insidious design for the infringement of our liberties and the introduction of popery into every department of the state'.[616] It was this accusation that led to the famous duel between him and the Duke at Battersea. This internal ideological tension aroused the suspicion among the members and supporters of King's College that the High Tories were trying to sink the ship. A sympathiser, without hesitation, concluded that 'there seems to exist something like a wish in its high Tory friends to put down this incipient institution.'[617]

Another factor that might have contributed to the weakening of the hostile sentiment among the supporters of King's College London was a rather ironic turn of events that took place in the early years of the 1830s, namely, the appointment of Henry Brougham as one of its governors. This appointment was not based on personal connections or preference, as it was obvious that Brougham was an unpopular choice among the founders and supporters of the college; it occurred, rather, as a result of a legal injunction. The charter of the institution explicitly stated that the Lord High Chancellor, by the virtue of his office, would automatically become one of the governors of the college.[618] This simply meant that when the Whigs formed their government in 1830 with Brougham as the Lord High Chancellor, the college could not avoid making him their governor. As a governor he was required to attend the meetings of the King's College Council, but decided not to. In a letter to the council, Brougham explained that he refrained from attending the sessions 'from

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[616] 'Letter from the Earl of Winchelsea to Henry Nelson Coleridge Esq.', *Morning Post*, Tuesday, March 17, 1829.
[617] 'King's College', *Spectator*, 2:39 (Mar. 28, 1829), 200.
[618] *The Charter and By-Laws*, 4-5.

feeling, that the connexion I have had and still have with the London University might give some jealousy to my Colleagues of King's College'. He assured the council, however, that none of its members 'can have a warmer desire for the benefit of King's C. than I have, and always have expressed publickly and privately'. In its reply, the council expressed that it would 'feel honoured by his Lordship's presence, whenever it may be convenient to him to assist at their deliberations'.[619] Although this exchange of kind words might be no more than a formality that had to be observed in any official correspondence, it is also clear that in such a situation each party was encouraged to adopt a less hostile posture, and generally be more diplomatic about the situation. From this exchange we can see that our case for the similarities and ties between King's College London and the London University has its basis in the attitudes and behaviour of historical actors themselves. The sense of affinity between the two institutions, however, did not merely develop out of administrative and structural considerations. As we shall demonstrate, in a broader and more important sense, this feeling also stemmed from their shared metropolitan and middle-class experience. There is no doubt that the London University was more explicit in advertising its focus on the middle-class experience than King's was; in practice, however, King's was just as preoccupied. And this inevitably corroded its liberal ethos. Therefore, it was in this respect that one could say, in relation to traditional liberal education, both the London University and King's College London actually represented relatively similar socio-cultural attitudes.

[619] Council Minutes, 'Meeting of the Council, Thursday 20 January 1831'.

King's College London as a Middle-class and Metropolitan Institution

Although the middle-class and metropolitan character of the college was an unintended consequence of the reactionary nature of its foundation, it had an active role in imbuing the institution with a particular socio-cultural meaning that weakened both its sense of being liberal and its deference to the ancient universities. This process occurred because some supporters and members of King's College London, as early as 1828, identified more with the wider campaign for the expansion of middle-class education than with the confessional and liberal aims of its founders. This development was inevitable because the Anglican discourse of the foundation alone was too limited to allow for a richer and meaningful articulation of the full potential of the college; while the aristocratic pretension of the founders and their lack of middle-class consciousness could not provide a sense of purpose that was in line with the aspirations and condition of the people that the college purported to serve.

'It has recently been observed', wrote one subscriber to King's College London, 'that there exists an order of man … for whose literary or scientific exigencies no adequate provision has hitherto been made'. They were those who occupied 'a middle station between the highest and the lowest', and who were 'not only numerous but of great importance to the community'. He then claimed that 'many persons of this description are deterred from sending their sons to either of those [ancient] Universities by prudential considerations'. It was for this reason that he valued the foundation of King's College London so highly, since it was clear to him that the object of the institution was to supply 'the youth of this intermediate class

with the means of acquiring knowledge at a cheaper rate'.[620] Speaking of the potential students of the college, he observed that 'the class of young persons, contemplated as most likely to take the benefit of it, must be chiefly such as are designed either for the liberal professions, or for the upper walks of trade and commerce'.[621] In a meeting held at Rochester, Kent in September 1828, intended for the collection of funds for the foundation, Reverend George Harker told his audience that 'the classes of persons to whom, I conceive, the proposed institution will be peculiarly valuable are those destined for mercantile pursuit' by which he generally meant the 'legal and medical professions, architects, surveyors, engineers, &c.' For him this was a praiseworthy enterprise as it was clear that hitherto 'no existing establishment' provided these classes with the education that they deserved. Furthermore, unlike those founders who esteemed the ethos of the ancient universities, Harker was critical of what he saw as their restrictive curriculum. 'The various ancient foundations', he complained, 'have almost exclusively confined their instructions to the Greek and Roman classics. No modern languages, nor the sciences to any great extent, are taught in them.' Hence with the foundation of King's College London, it was obvious to him that 'our youth will, at moderate expense, obtain all these advantages.'[622]

From this viewpoint, we can see that many connected this new college with the broader struggle for middle-class education and had a strong sense that the college was meant, like the London University, to fill the socio-economic gap left vacant by the ancient universities. As noted earlier, this assumption was a culturally meaningful one because it presupposed a still contested socio-economic definition

[620] A Subscriber, *Remarks on the Objects of Public Education*, 5.
[621] Ibid., 20.
[622] 'King's College, London', *Morning Post*, Thursday, September 25, 1828.

of educational need and led to a relative indifference towards the status distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen. Hence when Harker, in the above example, lumped together the respectable legal and medical professions with the more inferior surveyors and engineers under the category of 'mercantile pursuit', he was actually, like Campbell, viewing their relation in economic and financial terms, as trades. In this manner, the old distinction between liberal professions and trades was dissolved. It was also clear that, like that supporters of the London University, this longing for a distinctively middle-class university education gave rise at the same time to a preference for a broader curriculum that offered a wide range of subjects, and where students could choose the ones that they thought suitable for their socio-economic condition. Evidently the range of courses and their arrangement at King's College London were in agreement with this aspiration.

Basically, the academic courses of the college were made up of two categories; first there was the department of general literature and science, and second the Medical School. This categorisation was simply based on the distinction between 'General Studies' and 'Professional Education'. However, like the idea of general education at the London University, the general studies at King's were not equivalent to the notion of liberal education as subscribed to by Oxford and Cambridge. The subjects that came under the rubric of general literature and science were very diverse as, apart from classics and mathematics, it also included English Literature, Natural and Experimental Philosophy, Political Economy.[623] Although it was sometimes considered to be the liberal part of the college curriculum the category general literature here lacked the normative status that liberal education possessed, and it was merely treated on the same par with professional education. Hence, when an

[623] *Statement of the Arrangements for Conducting the Various Departments of King's College London* (London, 1833), 5.

advertisement in *The Athenaeum* referred to 'the course of education' at King's College London, it described it as a scheme that 'will partake of a liberal and useful character, adapted equally to professional and commercial pursuits'.[624] In fact, it can be argued that the professional and the commercial side of the curriculum were considered to be more important among the members of the college. At one point the Council considered the introduction of subjects like Chemistry and its application to the arts, and principles and practice of commerce, but for some unknown reason they never materialised.[625]

The sense of the importance of professional education was reflected in the treatment of the medical school. In comparison to other academic departments, it was evident that the governing body paid greater attention to the issue of medical education. The success of that enterprise would mean a boost to the reputation of the college. Therefore, speaking of the medical school, one observer wrote in *The Saturday Magazine* that 'The Council of the College have ever attached, and still continue to attach, a high degree of importance to this branch of their establishment, and have endeavoured to obtain for it all the advantages in their power'.[626] As at the London University, the reputation and quality of medical education here was solely conceived in professional terms and unconnected with liberal education. For instance, despite the urge to make liberal education a requirement for all medical students, the council decided that only those, 'who have it in their power, should devote themselves for some time to the General Studies of the College before they enter upon that course of instruction, which is more exclusively professional'.[627] The governing body could not make general studies compulsory because they

[624] 'King's College, London', *Athenaeum*, 206 (Oct. 8, 1831), 648.
[625] Council Minutes, 'Meeting of the Council, Thursday 1 April 1830'.
[626] 'King's College London', *Saturday Magazine*, 3:94 (December 21, 1833), 235.
[627] *King's College London. Medical Department*, 3.

realised that 'the great majority of medical students during their residence in the metropolis, have so many demands upon their attention within the limits of their own peculiar pursuits as to leave them very little leisure for other branches of study'.[628]

However what really made this emphasis on the professional dimension inevitable was the fact that, just like its Gower-Street counterpart, the medical school at King's College London was meant for individuals who were destined to be the rank-and-file general practitioners. Many of the medical students, therefore, were apprentices to surgeons and apothecaries in the metropolis. We can see this from the obvious disparity between the number of regular and occasional students. Cartwright and others have shown that when the school first opened in 1832, only 48 regular students registered, while the occasional students amounted to 339, and virtually all of them 'were apprentices who dropped into lectures and the dissecting room'.[629] The disparity remained wide in the following year when there were 77 regular and 233 occasional students.[630] The fact that the medical school served those who intended to enter a socially inferior type of medical profession relieved the institution of the need to make liberal education a requirement for its students. Parents themselves did not expect such an ambitious scheme as they were more concerned with how their sons 'managed to carry on the College Education & the apprenticeship at the same time'.[631]

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[628] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/O4, William Otter to Henry Smith, July 16, 1831.
[629] F.F. Cartwright (et.al), *The Story of King's College Hospital and its School* (London, 1991), 7.
[630] *King's College London. Report Presented to the Governors and Proprietors at the Annual General Court Held at the College, on Tuesday, the 30th April,* 1833 (London, 1833), 3.
[631] King's College London Archives, Secretary's In-Correspondence, KA/IC/G6, Phillip Sell to Henry Smith, October 9, 1833.

Hence, instead of categorizing their potential medical graduates in a manner similar to those who would have attended Oxford and Cambridge, the council of the college saw their students as belonging to the same category as those who were likely to attend the Scottish Universities. This can be seen from the fact that when uncertainty arose regarding the curriculum, they decided to refer to the practice of medical education at Edinburgh and Glasgow, among others, for confirmation. For instance, when Halford and other committees for medical education tried to justify their proposal for the separation of Theory and Practice of Physic, they alluded to the fact that 'this new arrangement is sanctioned by the practice of the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow'.[632] Halford's reference to the Scottish Universities in this matter is striking since it is well-known that as the leader of the Royal College of Physicians he discriminated against the graduates of those institutions in the selection for fellowship into his organization. However, this reference does not imply a contradiction with his belief in the superiority of Oxford and Cambridge graduates, as it was pertaining to the teaching of medical science. As we have seen in his testimony to the parliamentary committee for medical education, Halford did acknowledge the advancement of Scottish Universities in modern medical science. But he also held a strong conviction that the acquisition of medical knowledge alone could not form a good and socially respectable medical practitioner, as this required the attainment of a liberal education. Therefore, Halford and other council members designed the medical programme at King's College London as a self-contained professional education, relatively unconnected to liberal education, not necessarily because they believed that was the best way to train medical students, but due to

[632] Council Minutes, 'Meeting of a Council, 10 July 1830'.

their belief that such a programme suited the social background and expectations of incoming students.

However, after the opening of the college, the formation of the socio-cultural meaning of medical education at the institution was no longer in the hands of its aristocratic governors. By 1832, some medical professors, through their introductory lectures, began to stress the strictly professional character of medical education, and its superiority over the traditional medical ethos of the ancient universities. Furthermore, as with the discourse of medical education at the London University, there was a clear tendency to define the medical profession in terms of the application of theory to practice, which marked a break from the old ideal of a gentleman-physician. Nothing encapsulates this sentiment better than the address delivered by the Professor of Surgery, Joseph Henry Green during the opening of the medical session in 1832. Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to suggest that his address represented one of the most philosophically ambitious attempts to redefine not only the self-image of the medical profession, but liberal professions in general. Due to the abstract nature of the address, a reviewer described it as 'a word of a very high order', though 'idle people will denounce it as obscure, because it wants no small attention to follow the reasonings'.[633] This sophistication is unsurprising given that Green, as we shall see, was deeply influenced by the idealism of his mentor, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.[634] In the preface of the published version of the address,

[633] 'Address delivered at the Commencement of the Medical Session at King's College; Oct 1, 1832', *British Magazine*, 3 (January 1833), 77.

[634] According to Boyd Hilton, if the London University revered Bentham, King's College London 'made a corresponding obeisance to Coleridge'. Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, & Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (New York, 2008), 328; for a short article on Coleridge's attempt to secure a professorship of Chemistry for J.F. Daniell see V. Gold, 'Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Appointment of J.F. Daniell, F.R.S., as Professor of Chemistry at King's College London', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London,* 28:1 (Jun. 1973), 25-29.

he even admitted that 'the groundwork of my reasonings' was based on the recently published work of Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*.[635]

Joseph H. Green's Address: On Liberal Professions as the Application of theories to Practice.

Green opened his address by suggesting that one could not understand the nature of the medical profession without first having grasped the concept of what constituted a liberal profession. He then defined a liberal profession as 'the application of SCIENCE, by the actual possessors of the *same*, to the *needs* and *commodities* of *social man*.' For him, 'the essence of all science is in the reason manifesting itself in the intuitions of pure sense, as in Geometry; or in the conceptions of the understanding, as in Logic and Dynamics; and in the immediate truths of philosophy which we may best called *ideas*.' The term 'ideas' here was actually a technical term in Coleridgian thought. In his *Constitution* Coleridge distinguished between conception and idea. The conception of 'something' was a lower and partial form of representation of that thing, formed within the realm of mundane experience, and within the grasp of the common people. While the idea of something referred to the underlying and fundamental reality of that thing, in the form of *a priori* principles that constitute its being. Therefore, for Coleridge, 'it is the privilege of the few to possess an idea'.[636] Green, in his address, seemed to appropriate this metaphysical contrast between conception and idea, and translating it into the distinction between art and trade on the one hand and science and profession on the other. He

[635] Joseph Henry Green, *An Address Delivered in King's College London, At the Commencement of the Medical Session, October 1, 1832* (London, 1832), iii – iv.
[636] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (London, 1830), 4.

maintained that 'the root, therefore, of a profession, as distinguished from an art or trade, is science.'[637]

Each profession, legal, ecclesiastical and medical derived theoretical insight from its corresponding science, namely, jurisprudence, theology and physiology.[638] Hence, for Green, the members of the liberal professions were 'a learned class among whom, as far as the boundaries of existing knowledge extend, *skill* is grounded on or accompanied by *insight'*.[639] Despite the idealist and metaphysical idioms that constituted it, this picture of the profession was basically parallel with the one generally held by the medical members of the London University. Green, like John Connolly and Anthony Todd Thompson at the London University defined the medical profession in terms of the application of theory to practice. The only difference, perhaps, was that Green, due to the influence of Coleridge, delved deeper into the abstract discussion about the nature of theory. However, as far as this thesis is concerned, this difference is irrelevant. The more important issue is to determine how the characterisation of the medical profession, in terms of the application of theory to practice, was more likely to generate a subtle feeling of superiority over the ancient universities. This became evident when Green started to discuss the relationship between the liberal professions and the universities.

The professor of Surgery regarded universities as 'the nurseries of the professions'.[640] For him, Oxford and Cambridge still deserved our respect 'as the honourable asylum of the veterans of literature and science, for whom the sciences and liberal knowledges, historical and literary, their enlargement and conservation, form a sufficient sphere, abstracted from the duties of their immediate application

[637] Green, *Address Delivered in King's College London*, 2.
[638] Ibid., 3.
[639] Ibid., 23.
[640] Ibid., 33.

and distribution'.[641] He then expressed his conviction that 'in the cultivation and progressive extension of the pure and more austere sciences, and in the sedulous research of ancient learning, the elder universities … will take the lead'.[642] However, as the nature of learning at those universities was not oriented towards the immediate application of the hands-on medical training, Green was unwilling to concede the claim of their supremacy in producing graduates for the medical professions. In his opinion, 'an institution appropriate to the needs, and commanding the resources of this great metropolis' was in a better position to serve the professions, as it could provide the kinds of knowledge 'that stand in most immediate connexion with the spirit of the age, with the temporal and physical needs or enrichments of society', and was more likely able to facilitate the '*the practical application of these knowledges* … for the wealth or well-being of the community'.[643] This picture highlighted the greater potential offered by King's College London, as compared to the ancient universities, while at the same time implying a sentiment that endorsed the separation between liberal education and the medical profession. It is no surprise that Green held this view since he himself had no personal attachment to these ancient institutions and their liberal education. Like most surgeons his career path had developed through apprenticeship at the College of Surgeons, rather than through a university education.

However, it is also obvious that in defining the limitation of the ancient universities, Green's style was less polemical than the one adopted by some of the medical staff of the London University. This was most likely due to his awareness of the personal reverence that most of the council members had towards those ancient institutions.

[641] Ibid.,, 37.
[642]Ibid., 39-40.
[643] Ibid.,, 40-41.

In the address, he praised the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge as seminaries where a student would be formed by 'the venerable characters and laws, the habits and remembrances of the august building in which he himself dwells, and mildly coerced by a peculiar discipline' and because of this experience the student knew he would 'be hereafter considered by others as entitling him to a distinct rank to society'.[644] Green, however, maintained that 'these advantages may be impracticable in a *Metropolitan Institution,* or unadvisable, or, lastly, incompatible with other advantages of equal moment and more urgent local demand'. Nevertheless he still hoped some of the communal practices and values of Oxbridge could be retained at King's, so as to encourage students to 'regard themselves as members of one body, brothers in the same household; to form among them a correspondent law of honour, of self-respect … in short, to form that sentiment, that habit of honour and gentlemanly feeling'.[645] In other words, he hoped that the new educational process could co-exist with some of the values of liberal education. In the next and final part of this chapter, we shall see how the practical atmosphere of the metropolis shattered this hope.

Vulgar and Practical: the Metropolitan Atmosphere

The atmosphere of the metropolis engendered a sense of detachment from the ethos of liberal education in two ways: first, by generating the need to be practical, and second, by placing far less emphasis on status hierarchy. Earlier we saw how George Long, in his introductory lecture for Greek Language at the London University, acknowledged the need to ensure his presentation met the expectations

[644] Ibid., 38.
[645] Ibid., 38 -39.

of his practically minded audience. At King's College London, we can find the expression of the same feeling in the introductory lecture to German Language and Literature, delivered by A. Bernays. He began his lecture by saying that those who expected from him 'a metaphysical argument on German philosophy' or 'an abstruse disquisition on the origin and nature of language' would surely be disappointed. This was because 'taking into consideration, that I stand here in an institution expressly founded to impart instruction to the youths of a busy metropolis, among a people eminently practical, whose time is almost exclusively devoted to the active pursuits of life', it was clear that 'all speculative views would be ill-time'. He therefore expressed his intention 'to render all my courses practical, and capable of immediate application.'[646]

The practical atmosphere of the metropolis inevitably led to the weakening of the sense of being liberal, as any practice that could reinforce such attitudes appeared irrelevant and meaningless. One of these practices was that of wearing gowns. For instance, the subscriber that we came across earlier thought that 'in this College, no academic distinction of dress will be required' as it was obvious that the 'advantages of a peculiar dress would be more than counterbalanced by its inconveniences; particularly, the difficulty of enforcing such a regulation'.[647] Although, as we have seen, the Council continued to implement this practice, the wearing of gowns failed to generate a sense of a communal bond or respect for status hierarchy in the new institution. From accounts of student experiences at King's College London, albeit from a slightly later period, it is clear that there was a significant lack of social cohesion and order in the institution. Frederic Farrar who studied there in the 1840s

[646] *An Introductory Lecture, Delivered in King's College London, November 2, 1831. By A Barnays* (London, 1831), 3 – 4.
[647] A Subscriber, *Remarks on the Objects of Public Education*, 19.

described the social relationship among students in the following manner: 'we students were not a homogeneous body living under one roof, but a conglomeration of separate atoms without a particle of authority over each other, we could not coerce boors into a better demeanour'.[648] Employing an Arnoldian idiom he recalled how some students 'were of course the merest Philistines, who neither understood the lectures nor cared for them in the slightest degree; and some, of yet coarser grain, had not the ordinary manners to respect the lecturer or their fellow students'.[649]

Edwin Reynold, who was with Farrar at the institution confirmed this assessment. While referring to students 'who flocked at that time to King's College, Reynold claimed that 'They were naturally no very distinguished samples of the rising generation; and were attracted in larger numbers to the practical departments of the institution than to its classical and literary side'.[650] The fact that he, in this context, emphasised their leaning towards practical courses seemed to imply an assumption that the obsession with immediate practicality was closely related to vulgar personality. Given this atmosphere, it is therefore unsurprising that the charge of vulgarity that was originally levelled at the London University was later levelled towards King's College London. This can be seen in the use of the famous derogatory title, *Stinkomalee*. Referring to the institution a satirical rhyme read, 'the Bishops and Deans are endowing a college, and founding a Stinkomalee of their own.'[651] Thus we can see that in terms of day-to-day experience, King's College London was in many respects similar to the London University. It too embodied a

[648] Reginald Farrar, *The Life of Frederic William Farrar: Sometime Dean of Canterbury* (London, 1904), 24.
[649] Ibid., 24.
[650] Ibid., 28.
[651] Casti, 'Epistle from H. R. H. the D-Of C-, to the Earl Of E-N', *The Times*, Monday Sep 15, 1828, 3.

new educational experience that was drifting away from the ethos of liberal education.

Chapter Seven

The Victorians and Liberal Education

Through the efforts of the Whig government, a Royal Charter was granted on 28 November 1836, which gave the new London institution the right to award degrees in arts, theology and medicine. To avail itself of this privilege, the London University had to give up its original title, and it therefore assumed the new name, University College London.[652] The new University of London however was not a university per se, but 'a mere government department to conduct examinations'.[653] It would examine and confer degrees to students from both University College London and King's College London. The governing members of the institution were appointed based on their reputation in the educational field. Among them were Thomas Arnold of Rugby and the two founding members of the original London University, Brougham and Grote. Since there was not a single representative from King's College London, the Council of the Anglican institution 'looked with most unfriendly eyes upon the new examining university'. They were left with no option, however, as it was only through the new measure that they could ensure the survival of the medical department.[654]

The establishment of the examining body marks the end of the period of this study. We will not venture further into the institutional development that took place beyond this period. However, in this chapter, we will briefly survey what light this study sheds on the Victorian period. The function of this chapter, in other words, is similar to the one on Priestley, i.e. to give a sense of continuity to our narrative. The

[652] Negley Harte and John North, *The World of UCL 1828 – 2004* 3rd edition (London, 2004), 80.
[653] F.J.C Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London 1828 – 1928* (London, 1929), 132.
[654] Ibid., 133; Gordon Huelin, *King's College London 1828-1978* (London, 1978), 15.

main question to be addressed here is how far the eighteenth-century experience of liberal education as a socio-cultural phenomenon survived into the later part of the nineteenth century? No doubt, given the proliferation of literature on education in the Victorian period, it is difficult for a short chapter like this to do justice to the issue. However, based on a selective reading of some writings and speeches, it is hoped that we can provide a suggestive if not a comprehensive answer to the question.[655]

The Victorian Sense of being Liberal and Liberal Education

The first concern of this chapter is with the state of the traditional sense of being liberal in the early and mid-Victorian period. It is argued here that, although it had not completely been abandoned, the Georgian notion of being liberal was continuing losing its charm. This was a result of the changing social atmosphere in the succeeding generations. Beginning from 1830s, the language of class started to become a dominant social idiom, which meant issues in politics, economy and education were increasingly discussed and articulated along class lines.[656] This development greatly undermined the discursive and practical effect of the gentleman/vulgar status distinction in various domains of life. This is not to suggest, of course, that Victorians had no concept of gentlemanliness. Generally, they were still interested in the issue of gentlemanliness as a moral ideal and used the designation 'gentleman' in their daily lives.[657] However, a lot of discussions of the definition of a gentleman that sprung in the mid and later part of the century suggest

[655] Apart from some newspaper articles and correspondence, the sources that will be consulted here include the writings of Thomas Henry Huxley, Frederic Farrar, Herbert Spencer and Matthew Arnold.
[656] Asa Briggs, 'Middle-Class Consciousness in English Politics, 1780 – 1846', *Past & Present* (April 1956), 71.
[657] E. Fitzjohn, 'What Makes a Gentleman', *Every Boy's Magazine,* Sunday February 1, 1863, 88; 'What Makes a Gentleman', *English Gentleman*, Saturday May 9, 1846, 297.

that the gentleman was becoming a more an exotic species or an object of curiosity than a real and effective social actor. The popular excitement in asking the question, 'what constituted a gentleman', implied the uncertainty of contemporaries concerning the place or relevance of this traditional social group in modern society.[658]

What further contributed to the erosion of the traditional sense of being liberal was the fact that antagonistic cultural elements that emerged in the 1820s, such as the new political meaning of being liberal and utilitarian sensibility, began to gain greater currency in the later decades. By the 1840s, 'liberal' had become well established in the political vocabulary. The contestation over the meaning of the word now revolved around the issues of its application to political parties, and principles.[659] In other words, by this time, being liberal was more a matter of political affiliation rather than of socio-cultural standing. Some observers noted that people no longer referred to someone as liberal because of his generous or enlarged personality, but because of his political orientation. One writer, for instance, had to remind his contemporaries that 'a liberal minded-man' was completely different from a Liberal.[660] There was also a feeling, in this period, that the eighteenth-century definition of 'liberal' was a relic of the past. In 1841 George Cruikshanks remarked that the meaning of liberal as 'Becoming a gentleman, generous, nor mean' was only to be found 'in an old and seemingly forgotten dictionary.'[661]

The Victorian period also witnessed greater manifestations of utilitarian sensibility not only in education but in almost all facets of life. '"What is the use of it?"', wrote

[658] Ruskin, 'What is a "Gentleman?"', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, Saturday January 11, 1862, 21.
[659] *Daily News*, Saturday April 11, 1857; 'What is a Liberal', *Dundee Courier & Argus*, Monday January 15, 1866.
[660] 'What is the meaning of Liberal Minded?', *London Pioneer*, Thursday November 04, 1827, 456.
[661] 'Varieties', *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, Thursday May 27, 1841.

one observer, was 'the question most frequently put in this utilitarian age. Everything now, indeed, has to be subjected to the test of utility'.[662] Another commentator spoke of 'these utilitarian times of steam power'.[663] By the 1850s, the obsession with usefulness was not only seen as characterising the educational mentality of the middle-classes, it was sometimes even considered as the characteristic of the nation itself. This was also a moment when 'utility' became one of the formal concepts of English cultural criticism. One could publicly 'protest against usefulness' as such, an act that would hardly have been intelligible at the beginning of the century.[664] For instance, one writer devoted a specific discussion about the 'practical tendencies in English Education' in which he claimed that 'Englishmen in general do not much care to learn at all what they cannot conceive of being able afterwards to use in active life.'[665] Comparing them with what he saw as the more intellectually refined Germans, the writer complained that the practical habits of his compatriots made them unable to appreciate notions such as 'general culture' and 'breadth of mind'.[666]

In this period also, the ideological implication of the distinction between the useful and the ornamental started to be critically evaluated. One observer complained that '[s]ome persons make an arbitrary division of things into useful and ornamental, and class mental culture under the latter head.' He claimed that they held a strong but unfounded assumption that 'if I were very cultivated I should not be so useful'.[667] This anxiety is understandable given that several formidable educational theories in the period were built upon this distinction. Among the most notable was the

[662] 'The Utility of Fools', *Bradford Observer*, Thursday October 21, 1858; pg. 7.
[663] 'New Publication', *Essex Standard*, Wednesday January 23, 1856, 1.
[664] ''Usefulness', *Saturday Review*, 9:229 (March 17, 1860), 333.
[665] 'The Practical Tendencies of English Education', *Economist*, July 4, 1857, 726.
[666] Ibid., 727.
[667] 'Usefulness', *Reynolds' Miscellany of Romance*, 8: 202 (May 22, 1852), 280.

educational thought of Herbert Spencer. In line with his social theory that promoted individualism, Spencer despised the traditional habit of prioritising the ornamental over the useful because that, for him, reflected the tyranny of social convention over individual needs:

> As the Orinoco Indian puts on paint before leaving his hut, not with a view to any direct benefit, but because he would be ashamed to be seen without it; so, a boy's drilling in Latin and Greek is insisted on, not because of their intrinsic value, but that he may not be disgraced by being found ignorant of them – that he may have "the education of a gentleman" – the badge marking a certain social position, and bringing a consequent respect.' [668]

Spencer's critical attitude towards social customs was something that he inherited from his father. As David Wiltshire observes, 'The elder Spencer never removed his hat nor addressed anyone by his ceremonial title, and spurned fashion.'[669] For Spencer, the importance of each subject should be evaluated in terms of three categories of value i.e., intrinsic value, quasi-intrinsic value, and conventional value. Subjects with intrinsic value such as the physical sciences were considered the most useful since 'they will bear on human conduct ten thousand years as they do now'. The study of classical languages was said to have quasi-intrinsic value because, although they provided information about the nature of English and other modern languages, their relevance was confined to those who spoke those languages, and would only last 'as long as our languages last'. The least important were those subjects with merely conventional value such as history since 'it has not the

[668] Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (London, 1993), 2-3.
[669]David Wiltshire, *The Social and Political Thought of Herbert Spencer* (Oxford, 1978), 4.

remotest bearing on any of our actions; and is of use only for the avoidance of those unpleasant criticisms which current opinion passes upon its absence'.[670]

Although the prevailing liberalism and utilitarian sensibility of the period weakened the traditional sense of being liberal, it did not lead to the abandonment of liberal education as such. Well into the early twentieth century, liberal education continued to be seen as the highest educational ideal and the superiority of classics and mathematics over other subjects also continued to be emphasised by some writers. Echoing the sentiment of his predecessors, John William Donaldson, a lecturer in classics at Trinity College Cambridge, defended the restriction of liberal education to classics and mathematics on the grounds that it was 'recommended by the practical experience of many generations.'[671] However, despite the presence of some elements from the eighteenth century, the discourse of liberal education in the Victorian period was fundamentally different from its Georgian predecessor. If the traditional sense of being liberal enabled eighteenth-century contemporaries to immediately understand the meaning and relevance of liberal education through their socio-cultural practices, liberal education in the Victorian era was no longer anchored in a shared life experience. As the meaning of liberal education was no longer immediately graspable, new formal theories poured in. From the 1850s, men of letters and men of science such as Thomas Henry Huxley, Frederic Farrar and Matthew Arnold began to debate the nature of liberal education itself. As Farrar noted, '[t]he principles and methods of Liberal Education are at the present time undergoing considerable discussion'.[672]

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[670] Spencer, *Education*, 12.
[671] John William Donaldson, *Classical Scholarship and Classical Learning Considered with Especial Reference to Competitive Tests and University Teaching: A Practical Essay on Liberal Education* (London, 1856).
[672] Frederic Farrar (ed.), *Essays on a Liberal Education*, 2nd edition (London, 1868), v.

This new phenomenon overlapped with another development in the educational discourse of the period, namely the rise of the natural sciences as a distinct field of study. There was an increasing demand for universities to offer degrees in these sciences. For instance, in May 1858, a memorandum was sent to the University of London urging the institution to offer Bachelor of Sciences degrees.[673] This development, however, poses a particular problem for the interpretation of liberal education in the period. As Roy Macleod suggests, by mid-century a new line of conflict emerged between the proponents of the natural sciences and the defenders of classics.[674] The development of this antagonism has led many historians to treat educational conflict merely on the level of fields of study.[675] Victorian educational debates, therefore, appear more like the twentieth-century two cultures controversy between science and the humanities.[676] In fact, Stefan Collini even considers the exchange between Huxley and Arnold on science and literature in 1880s as an event that 'prefigured the later clash between [C.P] Snow and [F.R] Leavis in 1950s and 60s.[677] By this thinking, the prevailing discussion on liberal education was part of a broader conflict between science and the humanities. Hence, Huxley's discourse on liberal education, for instance, was different from that of Arnold because it promoted science.

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[673] James Heywood, *Academic Reform and University Representation* (London, 1860), 108 - 112.
[674] Roy Macleod and Russell Moseley, 'Breaking the Circle of the Sciences: The Natural Sciences Tripos and the "Examination Revolution"', in Roy Macleod (ed.), *Days of Judgment, Science, Examination, and the Organization of Knowledge in Late Victorian England* (Driffield, 1982), 206.
[675] Susan Faye Cannon, *Science in Culture: The Early Victorian Period* (Kent, 1978), 15; Janet Howarth, 'Science Education in Late-Victorian Oxford: a Curious Case of Failure', *English Historical Review*, 102:403 (April 1987), 344; G.W. Roderick and M.D. Stephens, 'Scientific Studies at Cambridge and Oxford 1850-1900', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 24:1 (Feb., 1976).
[676] C.P. Snow coined the famous phrase 'The two cultures' in his Rede lecture of 1959. It refers to the fundamental tension between scholars of humanities and scientists in terms of their outlook and role in the society. Snow saw the crux of the problem as lying in the reluctance of the humanists to share and understand the vision and outlook of the scientists. This view was later challenged by the literary critic, F.R Leavis.
[677] Stefan Collini, introduction to C.P Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge, 1998), xv.

As it is limited to the level of disciplinary conflict, this interpretation sheds little light on the understanding of liberal education as an educational mentality. It could be argued that the conflict between science and classics can also be understood in terms of contrasting attitudes to liberal education. What matters in this respect is not who promoted science and defended classics, but who still presented their case through the language and assumptions of liberal education and who did not. Some historians are aware, for instance, that Huxley in some respects was more in affinity with Arnold than with some advocates of science. W.F. Connell maintains that 'If the classicists be regarded as the right wing, and the scientists, as befits a radical movement, the left then', Arnold may be said to be 'a little to the right of centre', Huxley, 'a little to the left' and Spencer on 'the extreme left'.[678] There is some truth in this statement in the sense that Huxley was closer to Arnold than to Spencer. However, even Connell's metaphor here is still based on the idea of a struggle between science and classics. In this scheme, Huxley was different from Spencer because he was more willing to appreciate the relevance of classics. This, however, completely omits liberal education from the picture. The difference between them should not be evaluated simply in terms of what they thought about science or classics. It is also important to understand whether or not their thinking about those subjects were governed by assumptions of liberal education.

However, if liberal education in the period was no longer grounded in the traditional sense of being liberal, then what kind of assumptions could be said to underpin it? These assumptions were manifested in two popular Victorian idioms 'mental culture' and 'culture'. When viewed in terms of these idioms, Arnold and Huxley

[678] W.F. Connell, *The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arno*ld (Westport, Connecticut, 1950), 187-188.

can be seen to represent the same educational mentality i.e., liberal education. As Rothblatt suggests, nineteenth-century liberal education shifted from the eighteenth-century emphasis on social and moral virtues like generosity to a focus on mental training or the development of 'cerebral qualities'.[679] But how did the Victorian attitude towards mental culture differ from the Georgian emphasis of breadth of mind? The old attitude was still part of the concern for the formation of the whole personality, while the new one treated mind as a self-sufficient entity. Therefore, if a refined gentleman embodied breadth of mind in the Georgian period, an intelligent man embodied mental culture in the nineteenth century. As one contemporary remarked, 'what can be more precious to an affectionate parent than an intelligent child'.[680] Since it conferred greater ontological status on the abstract mental state, this Victorian disposition was less entangled with concrete socio-cultural practices. This means that mental culture was not seen as the exclusive property of the gentlemanly or privileged classes, but as a quality attainable by people of all classes. Hence, while discussing the relationship between mental culture and young people, one speaker told his audience that '[n]o man can look at the signs of the time without a deep conviction that on every hand a demand is pressing with increasing force for the active intelligence of the people in its fullest development.'[681]

The relevance of liberal education, therefore, was primarily seen in terms of its capacity to train the mind. Whether in defending the privileged status of classics and mathematics as subjects of liberal education or in making a case for the need to include modern subjects, all was based on this metric. Hence, W.H. Drosier, a

[679] Sheldon Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education: An Essay on History and Culture* (London, 1976), 130.
[680] 'The Mind and Its Education', *Lady's Newspaper*, Saturday October 25, 1856.
[681] 'The Responsibility of Young Men, Arising from their Increased Facilities for Mental Culture', *Liverpool Mercury*, Friday December 30, 1853.

medical lecturer at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, argued that chemistry deserved to be recognised as part of liberal education since it also provided rigorous mental training and rigid investigative techniques for students.[682] This preoccupation with mental discipline was also related to the belief in the effectiveness of examination. Classics and mathematics, maintained Isaac Todhunter of Cambridge, should be recommended 'on the ground of the accuracy with which we can compare the relative performance of the students'. Their definite character meant 'examinations can be brought to bear upon what is really most valuable in the subjects'. To illustrate his point, he then compared mathematics with history and concluded that 'what constitutes the real value of mathematics can be tested by examinations, but in history there is little of this merit'.[683] In general we can say that in this period liberal education became synonymous with mental culture itself. Hence, when a politician, who prided 'himself upon his liberal education', made some grammatical mistakes in his public orations, one contemporary could not help observing that 'his mental culture bears no fruit in his election speeches'.[684]

Apart from 'mental culture', another Victorian idiom that represented the underlying assumptions of nineteenth-century liberal education was 'culture'. According to Terry Eagleton it was in this period, and particularly through Arnold that the word 'culture' became 'an abstraction in itself'.[685] Huxley and Arnold, might have differed on their stance towards classics and science, but both of them shared the same assumption that the highest form of education was the one that conferred culture. Hence, with regard to 'the purpose of attaining real culture', Huxley

[682] Peter R.H. Slee, *Learning and a Liberal Education: The Study of Modern History in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester, 1800-1914* (Manchester, 1986), 32.
[683] Isaac Todhunter, *The Conflict of Studies and other Essays* (London, 1873), 6 – 7.
[684] *Huddersfield's Chronicle*, Saturday June 24, 1865.
[685] Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford, 2000), 1.

believed that 'an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education'.[686] It was the commitment to this assumption that distinguished Huxley from Spencer, despite the fact both of them promoted natural sciences. Unlike in Spencer's rhetoric, Huxley's argument for the credentials of science was not made on utilitarian grounds. For him, natural knowledge was valuable not so much because it 'conferred practical benefits to men', but rather because it revolutionised 'their conceptions of the universe and of themselves' and profoundly altered 'their views of right and wrong'.[687] Heavily critical of the educational philosophy of those he called 'practical men', Huxley attacked their obsession with applied knowledge and even wished that the 'phrase, "applied science," had never been invented'.[688]

In comparison to Huxley, Arnold was more elaborate on what he meant by culture. However, just like the man of science, he considered culture as the best antidote to the mechanical and practical character of the age. For him, culture 'as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization'.[689] Culture was more than just a 'scientific passion for pure knowledge', it also included a 'moral and social passion for doing good'.[690] The pursuit of culture was the pursuit of perfection. Some of the personal traits associated with eighteenth-century liberal education, such as refinement of character and disinterestedness, were also present in Arnold's notion of culture. It is therefore unsurprising that Rothblatt considers it to be 'a restatement of the central tenets of

[686] Thomas Henry Huxley, *Science and Education Essays* (New York, 1896), 141.
[687] *Autobiography and Essays by Thomas Henry Huxley*, ed. Brander Matthews (New York, 1969), 168.
[688] Ibid., 230 -231.
[689] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge, 1993), 63.
[690] Ibid., 59.

the eighteenth-century idea of a liberal education.'[691] However, despite some similarities between the two, there was a fundamental difference that should not be overlooked. Contrary to eighteenth-century liberal education that took for granted the status distinction between gentlemen and the vulgar, Arnold's culture promoted the idea of social equality. Culture, as Arnold maintained, 'seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere'. Therefore, for him, 'the men of culture' were not only 'the true apostles of equality' but also the pioneers who diffused knowledge 'outside the clique of the cultivated and learned'.[692] This is in line with Paul White's observation that both Arnold and Huxley introduced 'a single model of culture' that was meant to transcend social, economic, and political differences.[693] Arnold's culture was thus removed from concrete socio-cultural practices. If the eighteenth-century notion of disinterestedness was tied to the assumption that the socio-economic independence of gentlemen guaranteed their impartiality of judgment, that of Arnold was connected to an abstract belief in the ability of mind itself to rise above personal interest. In general, one can say that the Victorian reliance on such abstract notions as mental culture and culture in justifying the relevance of liberal education, signified a radical break from the eighteenth-century notion of liberal education as a concrete socio-cultural phenomenon.

[691] Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change*, 150
[692] Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 79.
[693] Paul White, *Thomas Huxley: Making the 'Man of Science'* (Cambridge, 2003), 89.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between the establishment of the London University and traditional liberal education. It began by highlighting the lack of literature on the subject and attributed that to the usual treatment of liberal education as a formal and systematic idea. This treatment not only limits the focus of historians to developments at Oxford and Cambridge, but also leads them to assume that there was no serious challenge to liberal education prior to the 1850s. As an alternative, this study proposed that liberal education should be treated primarily as a socio-cultural phenomenon grounded in the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal itself, which meant becoming of a gentleman. This new treatment, in other words, emphasises the interconnection between the eighteenth-century gentlemanly culture and traditional liberal education. We then discussed in detail how the core features of this culture, namely, the status distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen, and the living aura of a gentlemanly persona, enabled contemporaries to feel the relevance of liberal education in their day-to-day socio-cultural practices. From this conceptual discussion, it is clear that to understand whether or not an educational scheme or project departed from traditional liberal education, one should pay attention to the kind of attitudes that it embodied in relation to gentlemanly culture.

At least half a century prior to the foundation of the London University, it is possible to detect the emergence of some attitudes that were antagonistic to the socio-cultural assumptions of traditional liberal education. The evolution of Joseph Priestley's educational thought reflected the development of these attitudes in the 1760s until 1790s. This development can be characterised as the gradual estrangement of educational thinking from the culture of gentlemanliness. The

publication of Priestley's *Essay on a Course of Liberal Education* in 1765 was one of the earliest manifestations of this cultural shift. This well-known work identified the need for a special kind of liberal education for 'gentlemen of active life', as it alleged that the existing educational scheme was too scholarly oriented. However, despite identifying its subject as gentlemanly education, this treatise subtly departed from some of the core assumptions that underpinned liberal education. In contrast to the traditional understanding, the *Essay* assumed that the primary task of liberal education was not so much to enlarge or cultivate the personality of a gentleman, but to provide him with knowledge that would ensure his efficiency in future occupation. In the 1770s, Priestley's educational thought drifted further away from the traditional focus on gentlemanliness, replacing 'gentlemen of active life' with 'middle classes' as its subject. This shift culminated in the 1790s when his educational thinking that celebrated the potential of the middle classes was intertwined with his social criticism of the English aristocracy. In general, this transition in Priestley's thought reflected the gradual development of a new educational mentality that was becoming increasingly hostile towards the paternalistic assumptions of traditional liberal education. However, the impact of these early changes was limited by wider socio-cultural atmosphere of the late eighteenth-century that was still largely favourable to paternalism and liberal education.

In comparison to Priestley's time, the 1820s was more conducive to a deeper cultural challenge to traditional liberal education. The decade witnessed two developments in the political and intellectual culture that effectively contested the traditional picture of socio-cultural relations and which contributed to the erosion of the eighteenth-century sense of being liberal. The first development was the

emergence of liberalism as a new political attitude that generated an alternative meaning of being liberal that, unlike the old one, was more political and relatively indifferent to the question of status distinction. Radicals such as Leigh Hunt were among the first to promote this new sense of 'liberal' in their political criticisms. The second development was the intellectual and cultural rise of political economy which contributed to the formation of a novel picture of socio-cultural relations that was incompatible with the paternalist practices of deference and benevolence. This was most apparent in contemporary debates over the poor laws and charity, where political economists argued for the need for a systematic management of relief and criticised the old notion of personal benevolence which had long been the hallmark of a gentlemanly persona. The relationship between these two developments and the foundation of the London University is indisputable. It was not uncommon for contemporaries to describe the founders and the project as 'liberal' in the new sense of the word, and many members of the institution such as James Mill and John McCulloch were well-known champions of political economy. Furthermore, in contrast to the collegiate life of Oxford and Cambridge, which reflected the deferential characteristic of the wider society, the organisational culture of the London University itself was in conformity with the structural and managerial model of social relationships envisaged by political economy.

The attitudes of the London University towards liberal education can be understood if we explore the establishment and the early years of the institution in the context of three socio-cultural developments in the period where the traditional distinction between gentlemen and non-gentlemen was contested. These developments were the campaign for middle-class university education, the reform of the medical professions and the rise of utilitarian sensibility. As the foundation was part of the

broader campaign for a middle-class university education in London, its departure from traditional liberal education was reflected in the tendency of the founders to present their case for the extension of education in terms of the socio-economic categories of upper, middle and lower classes, which implied a rival cultural assumption to that which underpinned liberal education, i.e. the gentlemen/vulgar status distinction. Since by middle classes the founders usually meant tradesmen, who were traditionally regarded as non-gentlemen, the use of this socio-economic category was vital in freeing the respective social group from the stigma of being – alongside the lower-class artisans and mechanics – vulgar, and thus legitimising their candidacy for university education. The cultural significance of their claim was further confirmed by the habit of their critics that of referring to the institution not as middle-class, but as simply vulgar and cockney.

The establishment of the London University also represented an antagonistic attitude towards liberal education through its close association with reformist strands in the liberal professions. Particularly in relation to the medical profession, it was clear that the medical school of the university identified itself with the cause of medical reform in the period. Many prominent members of the institution, such as George Birkbeck, Joseph Hume and Robert Grant were well-known critics of the traditional medical culture and institutions, especially the Royal College of Physicians. Their reformist attitudes suffused the London University through lectures, official addresses, and the curriculum. Intended for the rank-and-file medical practitioners, who were previously denied university education, the medical school of the London University promoted the idea that instruction in medical sciences alone was sufficient for the training of a medical professional, thus undermining the old habit of associating the respectability of a physician with his

acquisition of a liberal education and his status as a gentleman. Furthermore, by characterising the ideal medical practitioner as an efficient practitioner, primarily defined by the ability to apply scientific theories to practice, the discourse of the medical school signified the emergence of a new professional identity that rivalled the old character of a liberally educated gentleman-physician.

Another aspect of the establishment of the London University that reflected a departure from traditional liberal education was its role in the rise of utilitarian sensibility. Contemporaries understood the utilitarian character of the institution based on the ordinary sense of utility i.e. immediate practicality, rather than the philosophical one represented by Benthamism. In the period, the critical and ideological potential of ordinary utility was evident in five of its main characteristics, namely, its pervasiveness in everyday language, its reference to the economic and material aspects of life, its contrast to ornament, its connection with philosophical utility, and finally, its relation to gentlemanly culture. These characteristics suggest that in employing the label 'utilitarian', contemporaries did not necessarily mean Benthamite, as the term could also refer to the ideological manifestation of ordinary utility that started to be widely acknowledged in the 1820s. Since the cultural atmosphere of the period was conducive to the use of utility as a critical concept, the supporters and members of the university could effectively employ the useful/ornamental distinction in their writings and speeches, which, as an evaluative framework in the educational discourse, served as a viable alternative to the liberal/illiberal contrast. Traditionalist critics of the London University noted this excessive ideological use of utility and portrayed the institution as a bastion of utilitarian education.

It was also clear that the supposed rival establishment, King's College London, shared with the London University some of these socio-cultural attitudes towards liberal education. Contrary to most historical accounts, the relationship between the two institutions was far from hostile. Not only were contemporaries aware of their similarity and the prospect for unity as early as 1828, but their members were also willing to exchange views on matters of common interest. Although King's College London, in comparison to the London University, had closer ties with Oxford and Cambridge, and its founders placed more emphasis on the traditional meaning of being liberal, it could not in practice generate an enduring sense of attachment to the socio-cultural assumptions of liberal education. This was mainly due to the middle-class and metropolitan character of the College that not only required it to respond to the demand for a professional and practical kind of education, but also allowed some of its members and supporters to view and define the meaning and significance of its establishment in socio-economic terms.

Apart from these substantive findings, this study also contributes to historical scholarship through some new methodological and conceptual refinements. In comparison to earlier studies, it has paid greater attention to the historicity of key concepts that have long been taken for granted in the history of liberal education. Apart from 'liberal', this includes the historical meanings of 'education', 'practice' and 'utility'. A deeper understanding of the contemporary meaning of these terms and their relations to socio-cultural practices, has enabled us to be sensitive to subtle conceptual differences that were overlooked in previous studies, such as that between 'education' and 'liberal education' and 'ordinary utility' and 'philosophical utility'. This insight has enabled us to raise new questions about the foundation of the university and reinterpret old materials in a new light, but also to

link by a common analytical thread subjects that were previously examined in isolation i.e. middle-class education, medical education and utilitarian education. However, this conceptual and methodological refinement would not have been possible if it was not based on a diverse range of empirical evidence gathered in this study. This thesis is different from earlier studies of the London University not only in its use of various types of primary sources, from the most literary to the most technical, but also in the manner in which it has related them. It has shown that documents pertaining to the university, whether administrative or academic, should be closely read alongside other contemporary materials if one is to identify their underlying socio-cultural assumptions.

The prospect for future research lies in the possibility of extending the methodological and conceptual frameworks of this study to other English educational institutions, especially Oxford and Cambridge. More detailed investigation is needed for us to understand the manifestation of the traditional sense of being liberal in the collegiate life of the ancient universities. Another way of extending the findings of this study is to the understanding of the relationship between the socio-cultural challenges to liberal education and changing attitudes towards apprenticeship. As this thesis has shown, in their attempt to extend education to tradesmen and lower-class medical practitioners, the founders of the university had to confront the long-held assumption that apprenticeship was the only route to future success. However, we do not know how far this confrontation itself was made possible by the cultural and structural condition of the apprenticeship system itself. As K.D.M Snell maintains, the early nineteenth century witnessed the breakdown of some traditional elements of apprenticeship, such as in the role and image of the master, who was now becoming more of an employer, rather than a

paternal figure.[694] In short, historians of liberal education need to extend their vision beyond the traditional confines of their field.

[694] K.D.M. Snell, 'The Apprenticeship System in British History: the Fragmentation of a Cultural Institution', *History of Education*, 25:4 (1996), 316 – 317.

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